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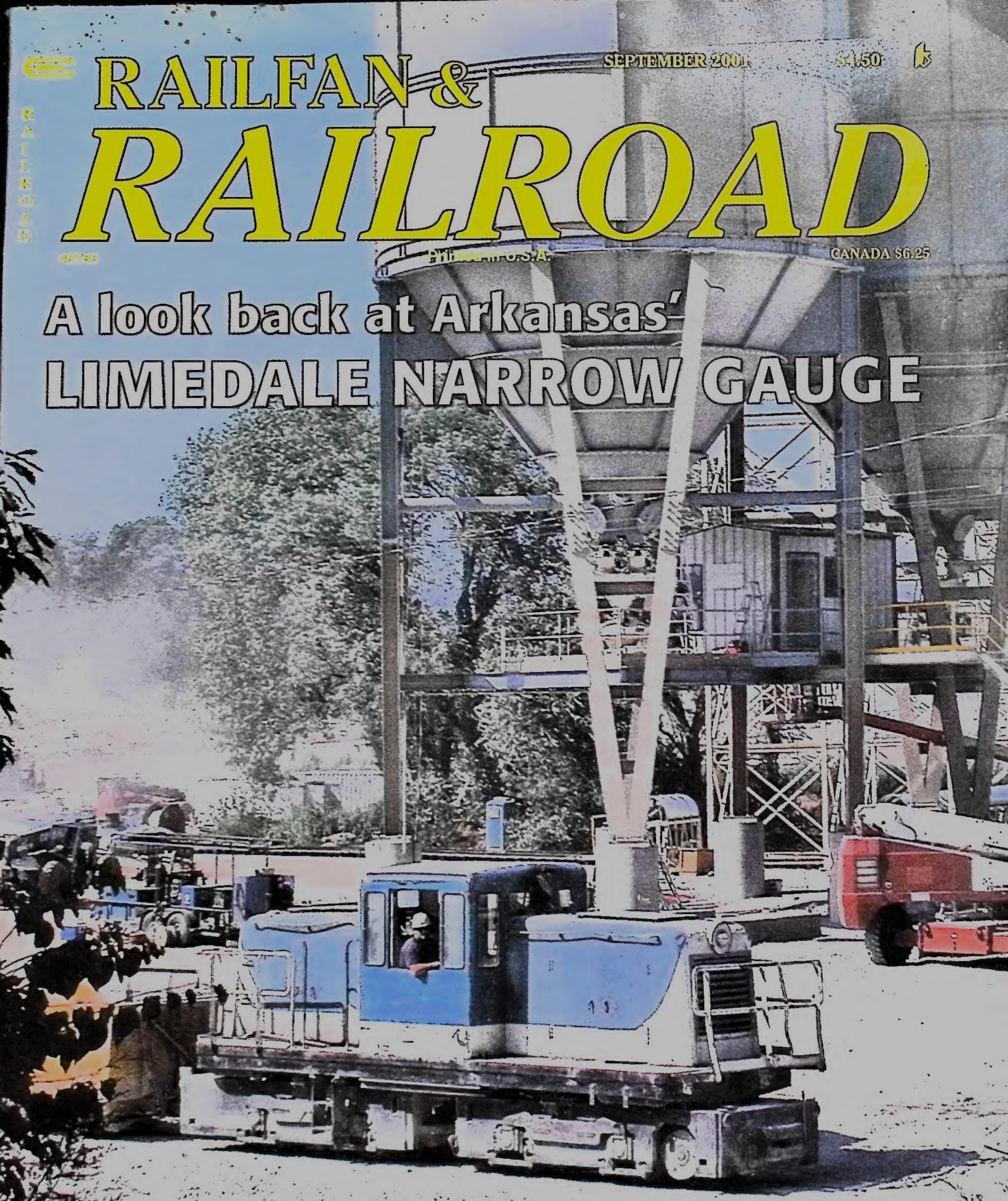
A look back at Arkansas' LIMEDALE NARROW GAUGE



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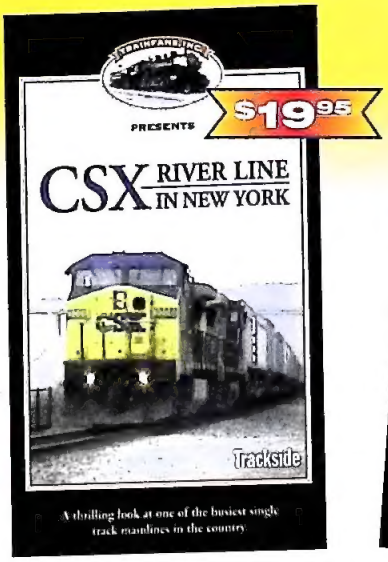

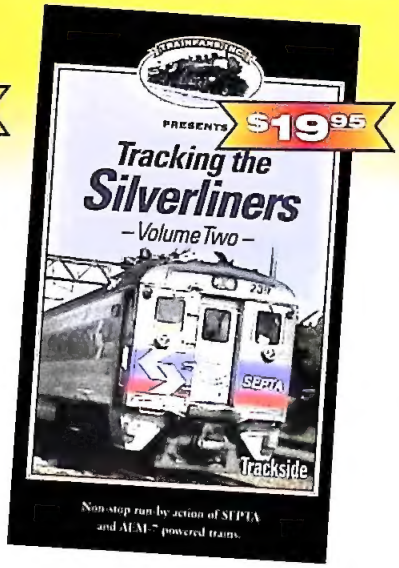

Wings and Triple Track

This action-packed, two video trackside set features heavy Union Pacific on the busy Nebraska mainline from Fremont to the North Platte area. With the "WINGS" prominent on the new SD70M units, we provide a great view of the triple track main west of Gibbon Jct. to North Platte. Locations include Fremont, North Bend, Schuyler, Richland, Columbus, Duncan, Clarks, Central City, Grand Island (where a busy BNSF mainline passes over UP with coal trains featuring colorful Heritage 2 painted SD70MAC's), Alda, Wood River, Gibbon Jct., Gibbon, Kearney, Odessa, Elm Creek, Overton, Lexington, Darr, Cozad, Willow Island, Gothenburg, Buttermilk Curve, Brady, Maxwell and locations around North Platte's Bailey Yard. We conclude with heavy evening action on the mainline west of North Platte at Hershey. The UP E9 units are being towed via freight along with vintage steam and diesel power seen at some of North Platte's city parks. On the multi track mainlines, some over-takes, triple meets and races are seen. Each release is approx. 90 minutes in length and was shot in May, 2001.

CSX River Line in New York

This trackside release captures the CSX River Line in New York State locations featuring one of the busiest single track mainlines in the country. We see lots of action at Valley Cottage, Haverstraw, West Haverstraw, Iona Island, West Point, Storm King Mountain Overlook, Newberh, Highlands, West Park, Kingston, Saugerties, Alsen, Coxsackie, and the Selkirk Yard area. Many different types of CSX units are seen including several, powerful AC6000CW units, former Conrail blue units and foreign power from BNSF and Union Pacific. We also capture a surprising Union Pacific SD70M with the dazzling "WINGS" herald leading an intermodal train. This release is approx. 90 minutes in length and was shot in April, 2001.

Tracking the Silverliners Volume Two

Volume Two features trackside SEPTA electric action at Pennsylvania locations Including Glenside, Elkins Park, Melrose Park, Fern Rock, Daylesford, Paoli, and Malvern. Many Silverliner IV MU's are seen along with the former PRR Silverliner III, and former PRR and RDG Silverliner II equipment. The MU's have been painted into an attractive rainbow paint scheme recently adopted by SEPTA. In addition, SEPTA's AEM7 electric locomotives are seen pulling Bombardier push pull train sets as well as Amtrak Genesis diesels powering Keystone Service trains. This release is approx. 70 minutes in length and was shot in April, 2001.

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on the cover

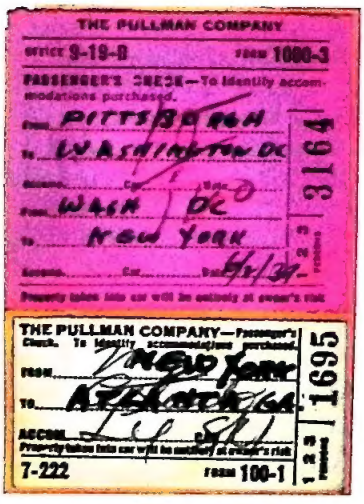
In its last season of operation, Arkansas Lime's three foot gauge General Electric 45 tonner No.2-LO-5 threads its way through the plant at Limeville, Arkansas, in the spring of 2000. Read about one of the last narrow gauge line haul operations in America on **page 6.** Photograph by Louis R. Saillard.

Publisher's Desk

Ticket Stubs

ON A LONG AGO CHRISTMAS, I received from my father-in-law, Robert R. Merkle, what appeared to be a photo album. Flipping the pages I discovered that the album was really a repository for his many years of rail and early aviation travel throughout the United States and Canada, when he was secretary and treasurer of Schick, Inc. Here were ticket stubs, mostly for Pullman service, for travel between Washington and Chattanooga, New York to New Orleans, Houston to St. Louis, Minneapolis to Kansas City, Kansas City to Dallas, Cincinnati to Miami.

Most of these were printed on light card stock measuring about 1 3/16" × 2 3/16", mostly printed in black ink on pink, light blue, light green, white or yellow stock. The tickets gave the starting and ending points of travel, as from Chicago to New York. This could have been printed with both cities listed, or with just one city (i.e. Chicago to _____). The conductor or ticket agent would then write in the destination city, such as Columbus or Oakland. The ticket also gave the car number and accommodation, such as Car 26, Room 10 between New York and Chicago.



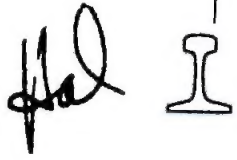
One larger ticket from Houston to St. Louis, Car 42, Lower Berth 9, indicated a change of train in St. Louis, continuing the run in car 632, Lower 4. Rarely, accommodations would be procured on the train. The Pullman conductor would give you a receipt with the cash amounts (there were no credit cards then and they didn't take checks), and the amount collected, to and from information, car and accommodation number and date.

Several of the stubs were issued by the Alton Railroad, Burlington Route for travel on the *Ozark State Zephyr,* for a parlor car seat. Another was a Texas & New Orleans parlor car ticket for travel between Houston and Dallas, car 2, seat 24. Canadian tickets were much the same as those issued in the U. S.

The early airline tickets, late 1930 to early 1940 period, were much the same style but were often printed on watermarked paper. There are samples of American Airlines, United Airlines, Transcontinental & Western Air, Canadian Colonial, Hanford Airlines and Northwest Airlines. Most of the routes were flown with Douglas DC3 equipment, but Hanford bragged up its early twin engine Lockheed Electras.

During World War II, military personnel traveling between domestic stations on their own were given vouchers good from rail travel, usually by Pullman if overnight. Vouchers for Army personnel were billed to the Finance Officer, U. S. Army, Washington, D. C.

Today's Amtrak tickets look much like their airline counterparts. In fact, you can book many trips one way on United Airlines and the other on Amtrak. The tickets are the same. An easy way to collect and save tickets today is to store them in No.10 envelopes, where you can also place old luggage tags (before they get ripped off) and other mementos of your travel.



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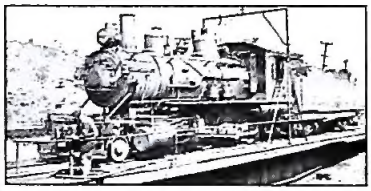

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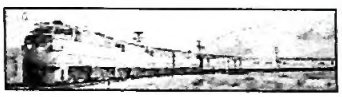

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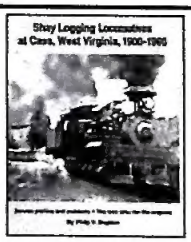

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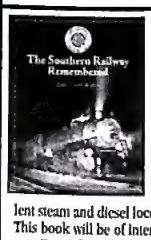

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Arkansas' Unsung

HAD IT DIED IN THE 1940s or 1950s, little note would have been taken of the demise of Arkansas Lime Company's 2½-mile narrow gauge railroad, for the history of industrial railroading has been largely ignored. Once, industrial narrow gauge railroads were everywhere, providing in-plant transportation in hundreds of locations from steel mills and brick yards to sugar cane plantations and manufacturing plants of every description.

And then there is that romantic railroad subculture, the narrow gauge, which in the industrial world fared better than the common carriers did. Since industrial railroads were usually self-contained operations, their inability to interchange with the standard gauge railroad network was often unimportant. As George Hilton wrote in *American Narrow Gauge Railroads,* "Ores, stones and timber frequently must be processed before final shipment, so that trans-shipment between [railroads of different] gauges presents no additional cost attributable to the gauge difference. At least until the development of the motor truck, a cheaply built incompatible railroad may have been the optimal means of transport for many entrepreneurs."

In the early 1920s a large limestone deposit was developed by the Batesville White Lime Company at a place to be known as Limedale, northwest of Batesville, Arkansas, on the White River Division of the Missouri Pacific Railroad. Extending a branch of the Missouri Pacific over the ridges to the limestone quarry itself was determined to be uneconomical, so the limestone processing equipment was located on the MoPac and a three-foot gauge railroad was constructed to the quarry. The narrow gauge would transport the raw material from its source to a ridge over the rock crushers and lime kilns. The raw limestone would be dumped into the top of the machinery for processing and the finished products loaded into MoPac standard gauge cars below.

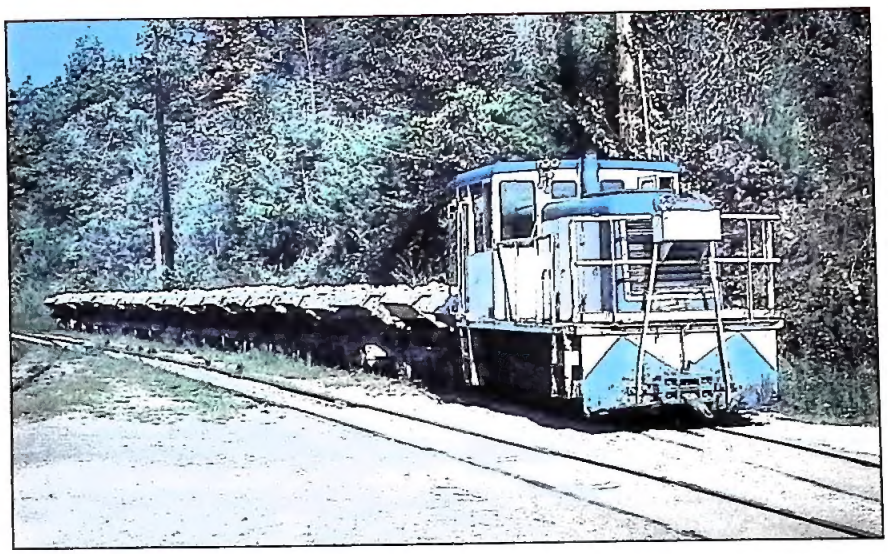
Alas, this obscure industrial line-haul operation has been converted to standard gauge. At least it's still rail!

A seven-ton Whitcomb gas mechanical locomotive and dump cars went to work on the new line in July, 1924. The tracks of 40 pound (later 60 pound) rail wound through the scenic Mill Creek valley, crossing the creek five times. The final climb to the top of ridge overlooking the MoPac tracks was a reported two per cent. The limestone was blasted loose at the quarry and loaded into narrow gauge cars. At the processing plant, some was crushed and sized for sale to the construction industry. Other limestone was dumped into wood-fired (later gas-fired) kilns for the production of lime used in agriculture and in dozens of manufacturing processes.

The lone Whitcomb labored at Limedale only until 1927 when it was returned to the builder in trade for a 12-ton and a 4½-ton unit which arrived that August. As the capacity of the Limedale plant

Narrow Gauge

by Louis R. Saillard

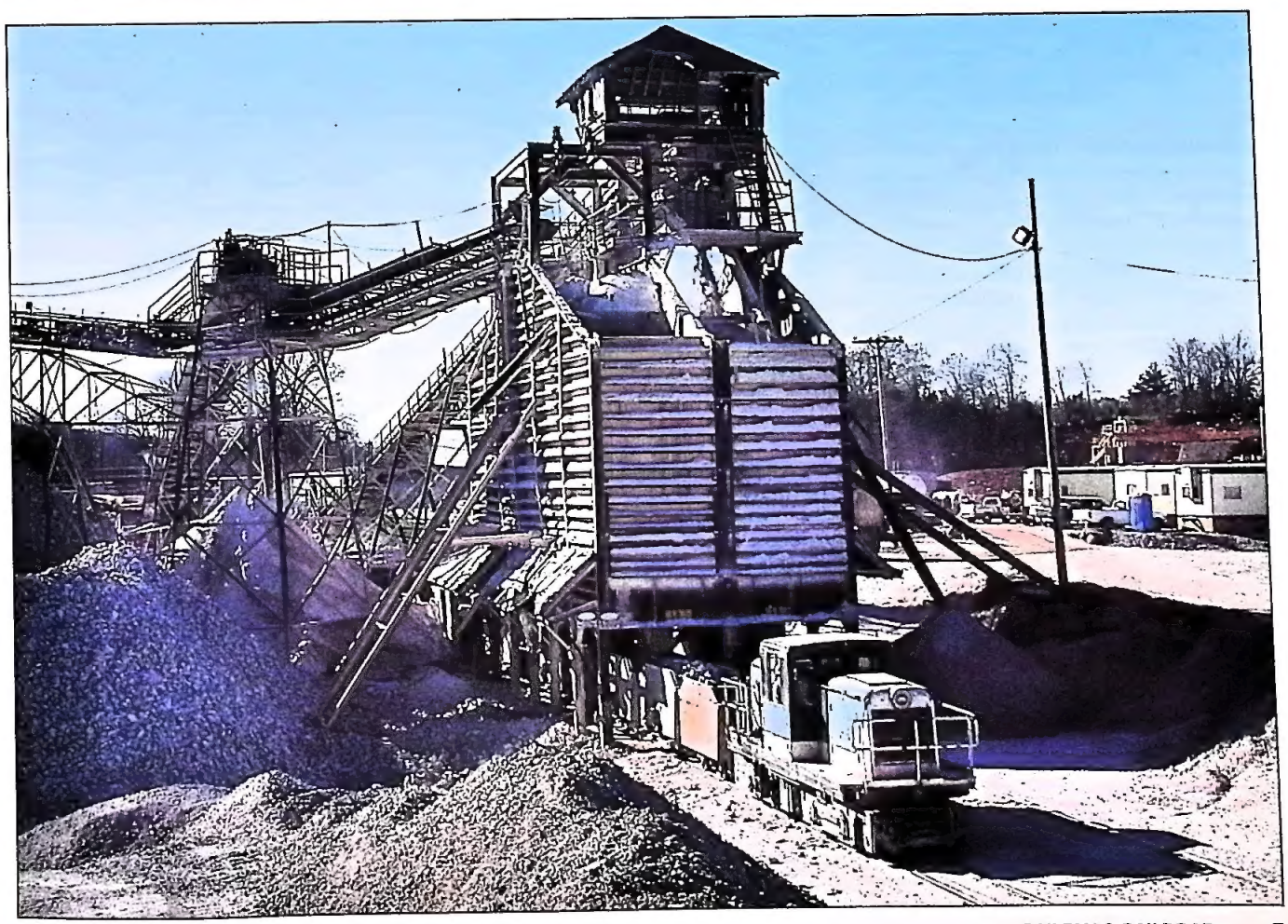


OPPOSITE TOP: **In the last year of narrow gauge operations, Arkansas Lime Company 45-ton GE 2-LO-5 crossed Bridge 5 in April, 2000. The yellow car behind the locomotive is an idler. This bridge along Limedale Road, one of of five over Mill Creek, was easily photographed.** OPPOSITE BOTTOM: **In this view from the cab, the climb up the ridge to the processing plant is just ahead as the train parallels Limedale Road just east of Bridge 5.** ABOVE: **Behind a GE 25-tonner, a train of tipple cars bound for the lime kilns is shown at the processing plant in 1990. Until the arrival of No. 2-LO-5, 25-tonners ruled the railroad.** BELOW: **2-LO-5 visits the two-track limestone loader at the quarry in April 2000.**

expanded, the small Whitcomb fleet became overworked. In a move which certainly bucked the upcoming trends in railroading, the little gas mechanicals were joined in April 1929 by the operation's first steam locomotive, a brand new 20-ton Davenport 0-4-0T (builder's No.2158). That November, nine second-hand Western four-yard capacity dump cars were added to the car fleet.

While the more powerful steam locomotive was an improvement over the tiny Whitcombs, it was also about the heaviest locomotive possible on the 40 pound rail then used. Probably with this in mind, the next motive power addition was a well-travelled 25-year-old Shay (Lima No.2188) acquired in September 1934. Apparently an experienced industrial locomotive, the little machine weighed just 13 tons and had served ten previous owners in four states before coming to Arkansas.

Shay locomotives are famous for their great power in relation to their size and their ease on the track.



ABOVE: **At the first grade crossing east of the quarry, a limestone train heads for the processing plant on October 19, 2000, just three days before the end of narrow gauge operation. The conversion to standard gauge was started on Monday the 23rd.** OPPOSITE TOP: **When dumping limestone at the processing plant, a roller on the car side was lifted by the "camel's hump." A yellow idler car next to the locomotive carried no limestone, had no roller and provided clearance for the locomotive.** OPPOSITE MIDDLE: **Arkansas Lime employee Paul Treadway stands near the "hump," shown in its retracted position the the right of the track.**

Another Shay came to the operation just two years later with the addition of an even smaller ten ton engine (Lima No.3098), just 16 years old, and with experience on two industrial railroads, both in Arkansas.

All this smoking up of the Mill Creek valley was joined by only one other known steamer, a second-hand 21-ton Porter 0-4-0T (builder's No.7074) which arrived about 1940. The Porter has the distinction of being the sole steam survivor of the operation, and was placed on display in a park near the White River in downtown Batesville in 1961.

By the end of World War II, the operation was obviously overdue for conversion (or rather, re-conversion) to internal combustion power. A new 20-ton Plymouth diesel-mechanical came in December 1947 and the road began to acquire additional second-hand diesel locomotives built by Whitcomb, Plymouth, Vulcan and General Electric. In *American Narrow Gauge Railroads,* George Hilton writes of one advantage of the narrow gauge: the ability to purchase used locomotives at bargain prices as other narrow gauge operations were abandoned or converted to standard gauge. While Hilton was addressing a time long before the 1940s, his premise still held true for the declining numbers of industrial narrow gauge users after the war.

The Batesville White Lime Company was acquired by Rangaire Corporation in 1962 and renamed the Arkansas Lime Company. In 1972, the road acqured a brand new Plymouth diesel-hydraulic, the last new locomotive purchased for the operation. Two second hand General Electric 25-ton diesel-electrics came shortly thereafter.

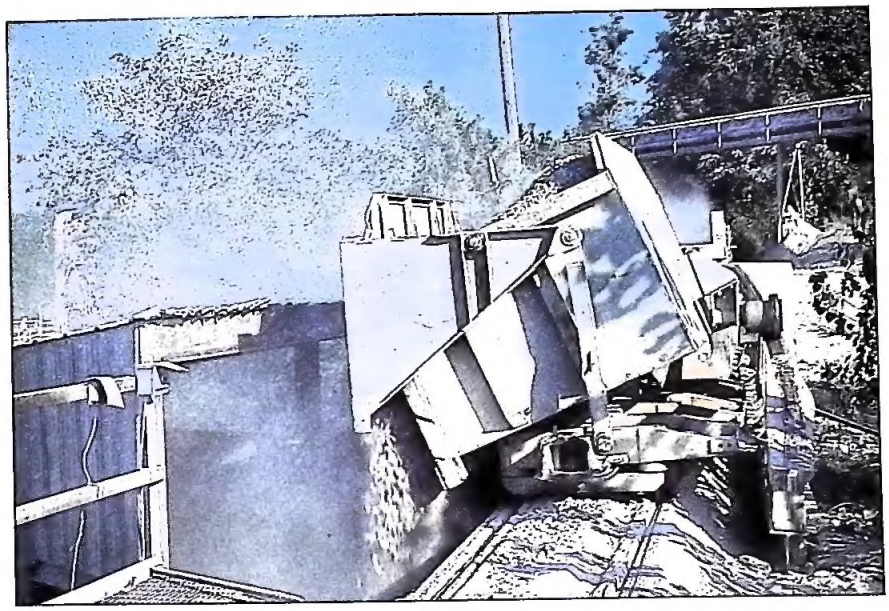
In 1974, the newly acquired GE's were apparently not doing well and the company considered selling them. Reportedly they were burning out traction motors as the weight of the limestone trains increased. The two diesel-hydraulics simply stalled without damage when faced with overloaded trains. The railroad obviously came to grips with this problem, as one GE 25-tonner remained in operation until the end of narrow gauge operation. Also reported on the property in 1974 were two out-of-service narrow gauge units abandoned at the quarry. One was described as "A Whitcomb about 400 years old."

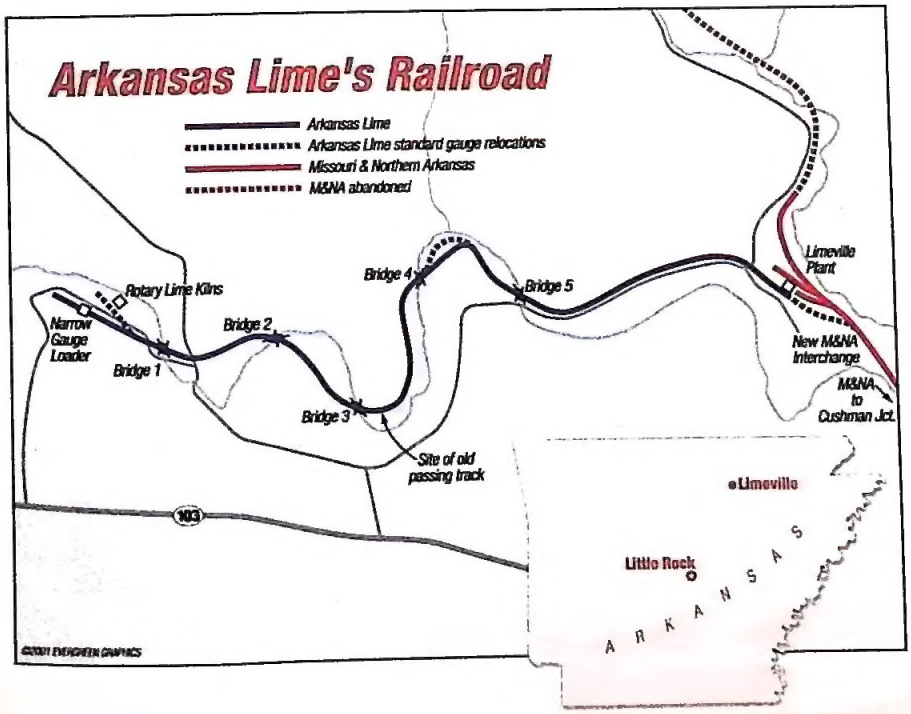
The line's final narrow gauge locomotive acquisition, a 45-ton GE diesel-electric (builder's No.32738) built in 1957, arrived in 1990. While seldom noted, Arkansas Lime also operated standard gauge switchers to switch cars at the Missouri Pacific interchange. A 40-ton six-wheel Plymouth was reported on the property in 1973 and a GE 50-ton diesel electric served the operation in later years.

For many years, two trains operated simultaneously on the narrow gauge tracks from quarry to processing plant, 24 hours a day. One train was made up of small "rocker" dump cars which supplied the lime kilns. A GE 25-tonner could haul about 18 of the small four-wheel, one ton capacity cars used until about 1990. Later, longer four-wheel cars with two dump bins were used in the same service. Larger eleven-ton capacity side dump cars were used for limestone bound for the crushers, and the GE 45-tonner could handle eleven cars. When two trains were operated, they followed each other from the two-track loader at the quarry to their separate unloading areas at the processing plant, unloaded, ran around their trains and returned to the quarry.

In 1997 the unloading area was rebuilt with additional rock storage area adjacent to the plant and large conveyer belts to transfer limestone from place to place. This eliminated the need to operate separate trains to the two unloading facilities. The runaround tracks were eliminated at each end of the line and one train was operated push-pull, backing empty downgrade to the quarry. A round trip with the eleven- ton cars could be made every 40 minutes on average. In its last years, narrow gauge trains operated an average of 20 hours each day. At one time a passing track (the "double track" to the crews) existed near the midpoint of the line, but was seldom used since the two trains generally followed each other from quarry to plant. Still visible to passing trains, the siding had been abandoned for many years.

The capacity of the narrow gauge trains had often been a limiting factor in the Arkansas Lime operation, and in 1999 the company announced that it





would shut down the narrow gauge and convert the railroad to standard gauge. While the railroad generally operated two shifts each day, on the last day, Sunday, October 22, 2000, only one shift was operated. Engineer Michael Justice brought the last narrow gauge train to a halt at the quarry just before 3:00 p.m. amid the early fall colors of an Arkansas autumn. Standard gauging of the line was expected to take eight weeks. One of the few remaining industrial narrow gauge operations in America had come to an end after more than three quarters of a century.

The construction of new gas fired rotary lime kilns had been begun in the summer of 2000 at a more convenient location near the quarry. Finished lime is now hauled in standard gauge cars from the new kilns to the Missouri Pacific (now Missouri & Northern Arkansas) interchange. The limestone rock crushers remain at the interchange, and rock is hauled by an EMD switcher from quarry to crusher in standard gauge hopper cars. Since the narrow gauge tracks ended on a ridge above the processing plant, a new roadbed has been constructed and a reported four per cent grade is used to climb westward from the M&NA interchange to the old narrow gauge right of way.

Several other changes have been made. The old 60 pound steel rail, now showing signs of wear, was replaced with 110 pound steel removed from a railroad in East St. Louis, Illinois. Years ago, track near the middle of the narrow gauge line was relocated to higher ground, away from the flood danger of Mill Creek. This relocation raised the line through a limestone cut and also sharpened a curve. With a broader curve necessary for standard gauge tracks, the curve was realigned back onto the old right- of-way, lengthening the line by about 1400 feet at this point. An additional 2000 feet of track was laid near the new kilns at the quarry, and the new standard gauge railroad totals approximately three miles in length.

The author would like to thank Jim Longenback and Michael Justice of Arkansas Lime Co. for their hospitality during the narrow gauge's last year of operation. Additional thanks go to Mark Landgraf and Don Hensley for providing additional information on the line's locomotives and cars.

New Video:

Central Doubles

90 - Minute video includes 1930 views of Ferrocarril de los Altos in western Guatemala, an electric line on an 8% grade (non rack), general scenes from the 1960s, then featuring Spring 2001 trips with narrow gauge steam doubleheaders in both Guatemala and El Salvador. Ride also the diesel mixed, a railbus, and visit the yards and shops along the way. There is a lot of slipping action on the steep mountain grades - spectacular trestles - and long sequences where both steam locos labor along the looping route, exhausts alternately in and out of sync, as seen and heard from atop the tender. The effect is truly like stepping back to many similar U.S. operations 60 or 70 years ago! All four locos are Baldwins. There's even a six-axle heavyweight observation car. Short interviews with new railway owners and officials are among extra features which help the viewer learn about and appreciate both the past and future of railroading in Central America. $24 Postpaid.

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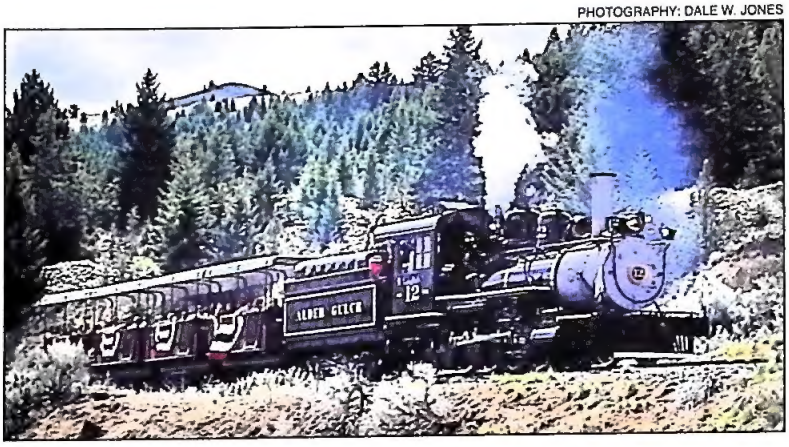
PHOTOGRAPHY: DALE W. JONES



***Baldwin 2-8-0 No. 12** pulls one of the season's first trains out of Virginia City, Montana on May 26, 2001 (**above**). The little Consol awaits its next run (**below**).*

Alder Gulch Short Line

MAY 26-28, 2001, found historic 30" narrow gauge Baldwin 2-8-0 No.12 starting its third season as the occasional power on one of Montana's remarkable hidden railroads, Virginia City's Alder Gulch Short Line. Virginia City has had a railroad since 1964, when Charles Bovey built his own narrow gauge railroad betwen two historic ghost towns, Nevada City and Virginia City, which never had regularly scheduled rail service before. The Northern Pacific built a branch line from Whitehall ten miles down to Alder in 1902. At the time, the valley between Alder and Virginia City was being dredged for placer gold deposits, so the track was never extended until the isolated Alder Gulch Short Line was built.

After acquiring the 1895 vintage Northern Pacific depot from Harrison, Montana, Mr. Bovey decided he needed a railroad to match. He had acquired two Davenport "dinky" locomotives from Anaconda's Great Falls smelter, which were used from 1964 to 1969. By 1969 the old ties used to build the railroad were rotted out, so the railroad suspended operations until 1972 when a gasoline powered "work train" started running. The work train was refined with the addition of a fake "boiler" in 1988 and various improvements were made until August 16, 1991 when the Nevada City roundhouse caught fire and destroyed the work train, the dinkies and many irreplaceable artifacts.

In September 1991, John Larkin of the Escanaba & Lake Superior came to Virginia City to purchase three 1906 Soo Line passenger cars in Mr. Bovey's collection. The following spring, Mr. Larkin delivered a rebuilt version of the work train including four cars equipped with air brakes, seat cushions and canvas tops, which was used until 1996.

On May 1, 1996, Mr. Larkin received the four Soo Line cars, the chapel car, and a Shay locomotive in exchange for restored 2-8-0 No.12 and rebuilding the Alder Gulch's track. Between then and 1999, the E&LS crew kept busy upgrading the track, and No.12's first run was on August 4, 1999. In 1997 the state of Montana purchased the Bovey properties, including the railroad.

No.12 began life in 1909 as one of four wood burning Ferrocarril Mexicano 2-8-0s used on the Zacatlan branch from Mexico City to Veracruz. It was converted to oil firing in 1920, and worked the Zacatlan line until its abandonment in 1957. No.12 was sold to F. Nelson Blount of the Edaville Railroad, which sold it to the Escanaba & Lake Superior, where it was restored for the Alder Gulch.

For complete information on No.12's operating schedule, call the Virginia City Preservation Alliance at 406/843-5300 or go to *www.virginiacity.com.* — *DALE W. JONES*

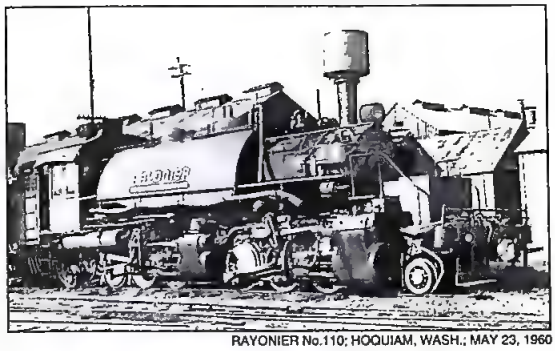
Fanmail

Letters from readers

Black Hills steam

Just want to let you know how much I enjoyed the May 2001 issue of RAILFAN & RAILROAD, especially Jeff Terry's piece on the Black Hills Central Railroad. It would be worth a trip to South Dakota to just see that 2-6-6-2T running — if they actually get it put back together again. The picture of the "locomotive" as printed on page 41 shows the Mallet to be a long way from how it looked when it was last in service as Rayonier 110 back in the early 1960s.

DOUG CUMMINGS / T.R. LAWSON COLLECTION



RAYONIER No.110; HOQUIAM, WASH.; MAY 23, 1960

Of course, according to Mr. Terry's story, the BHC forces did manage to revive that 80-Ton (not 65-Ton as stated) Whitcomb diesel they got from the Black Hills Power generating station. If they could get that beast going again, with its obscenely obsolete Buda diesel engines and Westinghouse electrical system, then there might indeed be hope to seeing a compound saddletank Mallet in stream again!

THOMAS LAWSON, JR.
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

Alcos in Mexico

In the May 2001 R&R I noticed the photo of the TVM Alco RSD12 in the Valle de Mexico (Mexico City) yard. TVM, which is the "Belt Railway of Chicago" of Mexico City (that is, a terminal railroad), has just two RSD12 restored to service. They are the 7447 and 7468. The caption stated six on the roster, which is correct. The other four, however, are stored in various stages of disrepair. And even though TVM owns many Alco C628s, none are restored to service, at least as of January 2001. Hopefully one day some will return to service, but to date there isn't the need. I just wanted to alert your readers that only two Alcos are in service and rest are stored with a dim future.

BUD BULGRIN
BROOKLYN PARK, MINNESOTA

Old bridge

My God! It's still there!

The photo at the top of page 33 in the May 2001 issue of Buffalo & Pittsburgh train BT-3 crossing the old "rickety trestle" at Chicora, Pennsylvania, really surprised me because I photographed B&O E-class 2-8-0s working trains across it 55 years ago. I wondered then if it could support the trains I saw with a pair of 2-8-0s fore and aft, and I can clearly remember how that wooden relic creaked and groaned as those slide-valved beauties thundered across. That structure was obviously better built than I thought.

And "Ten Years Later" Curt Katz still insists on coaling Frisco 1522 — though as far as I know that pretty 4-8-2 has always been an oil burner. If Katz is trying to convince someone to convert that engine to burn West Virginia real estate, don't tell George Bush!

J.J. YOUNG, JR.
CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA

Of all the cartoons Curt has drawn, the one we got the most mail about was when he depicted Frisco 1522 as a coal burner in the October 2000 issue. Naturally, when it came time to draw his ten-year anniversary cartoon for the May 2001 issue, Curt couldn't resist poking a little fun at himself. Sharp-eyed readers will note that on the computer screen in the cartoon, there's the 1522 parked at a coaling tower. — S.B.

Petersburg track alignment

I was moved to write because of the FANMAIL from Henry Korman in the April 2001 R&R. He mentioned A.M. Wellington's book, *The Economic Theory of Railroad Location.* I was amazed, because this book is so old. The copy I have is dated 1899, and is a sixth edition (possibly the original edition was published in 1887). I obtained the book between 1947 and 1952, since I wrote my name and address inside the cover, and I used the address of the student rooming house I lived in at the University of Illinois. I purchased the book in my hometown, Chicago, at the store Owen Davies ran on the near north side. That was a great place — he let you browse for a long while.

I checked the index of the book for a mention of Petersburg and found it on page 326. The entire story of the sharp curve at the end of the bridge in Petersburg (caused by the need to construct a new bridge after the original was destroyed during the Civil War) is on that page. Mr. Korman's recall was very good.

Wellington's book is well written. He expounds the principles so clearly, it was easy to see how they transferred to modern operations, even though they were written when motive power was mainly 4-4-0s. The one exception would be that freight train speed didn't have much significance then.

DONALD E. TAYLOR
REDLANDS, CALIFORNIA

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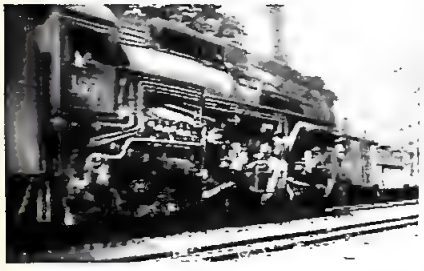

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Timetable

Railfan events guide

TIMETABLE listings are published without charge and are run on a space-available basis at the editor's discretion. RAILFAN & RAILROAD accepts no responsibility for date or time errors or cancellations. Notices must be received by the 1st of the month, four months prior to the issue cover date (e.g. January 1 for the April issue). Each issue will be in circulation for the full month preceding its cover date (e.g. April issue available during all of March).

CLINTON CORNERS, NEW YORK, through September 9. The Town of Clinton Historical Society features an exhibit on *The Enduring Harlem Line* from its birth in 1831 as the New York & Harlem Rail Road through its revitalization by Metro-North. The exhibit will be at the Creek Meeting House, Salt Point Turnpike, Clinton Corners (Dutchess County) and is open weekends from noon-4pm; donations suggested. For more information phone 845/266-9454.

ESSEX, CONNECTICUT, July 28-29. Railfan Weekend on the Valley Railroad featuring two steam locomotives. Saturday double-header, night photo session with R&R's Steve Barry, Sunday photo freight. Other activities and displays throughout the weekend, including the dedication of the Goodspeeds station. For more information contact the Valley Railroad, P.O. Box 452, Essex, CT 06426; 860/767-0103; *www.valleyrr.com.*

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, August 3-4. National Association of Timetable Collectors Convention at the Ramada Inn in Roseville, Minn. Dealers tables, Saturday night banquet. For more information contact NAOTC 2001 Convention, c/o John W. Rothwell, 4271 Shineway Drive NE, Ada, MN 49301.

BELLOWS FALLS ,VERMONT, August 3-5. Transpo 2001/Rockingham Old Home Days with visiting rail equipment and special rail excursions in addition to the *Green Mountain Flyer.* Night photo session Saturday night will feature a spectacular fireworks display over the equipment displays in the Green Mountain Railroad yard.

CINCINNATI, OHIO, August 4. *Summerail at CUT* sponsored by the Cincinnati Railroad Club and Miami Valley Railfans. A full day of activities featuring multi-media slide presentations, railroad show & sale and a visit to Cincinnati Union Terminal's Tower A. Scheduled presenters include Joe Biancke, Dale Brown, Brian Carleson, Mark Demaline, Ron Flanary, Steve Forrest, Terry LaFrance, Dennis Nehrenz, Mark Perri, Jerry Peyfer, Ron Spiga, Lance Wales and Gib Yungblut. Tickets sold in advance for $12 or on day of show if available. Make checks payable to Miami Valley Railfans and mail to Summerail 2001, Aubrey Flock, 4103 Elliot Avenue, Dayton, OH 45410.

EAST TROY ELECTRIC RAILROAD MUSEUM (P.O. Box 556, Waukesha, WI 53187; 262/548-3837; *www.easttroyrr.org*) will hold the following special events in 2001. Dinner trains feature special menus from famous trains of the 20th Century. Dinner train tickets $47, Tea Train tickets $23.50, reservations required. Contact the museum for complete details.

- **August 4,** *Golden State Limited* dinner train.
- **September 9,** Tea Train dinner train ride.
- **September 29,** *Olympian Hiawatha* dinner train.
- **October 6,** *Capitol Limited* dinner train.
- **October 20,** *Broadway Limited* dinner train.
- **December 1-2 and 8-9,** Ride With Santa.

ORRVILLE RAILROAD HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC., (P.O. Box 11, Orrville, OH 44667; 330-683-2426; *www.orrvillerailroad.com*) will host the following special events. Contact the society for complete details.

- **August 4-5,** Overnight excursion from Orrville to Pittsburgh for the Three Rivers Boat Regatta and fireworks *(see separate listing).*
- **August 25,** excursion to the Lorain County Fair from Canton and Orrville; tickets $39 economy coach, $45 regular coach, $75 first class, children $10 off above prices.
- **October 13,** loop excursion from Orrville to Medina, Ohio, out via Canton and Akron, return via Spencer *(see separate listing).*
- **November 23-24,** open house at the Orrville depot.
- **November 24,** Santa Claus trains between Orrville and Brewster, several departures during the day.

ORRVILLE, OHIO, August 4-5. Overnight trip to Pittsburgh for the 23rd Three Rivers Boat Regatta & Fireworks sponsored by the Orrville Railroad Heritage Society. Buffet lunch after arrival in Pittsburgh, plus sightseeing dinner & dance cruise on Gateway Clipper river boat. Ticket prices include rail fare, buffet lunch, boat cruise, bus transfers and hotel accomodations. Coach fare $239, first class $295, single room supplement $45. Tickets available from ORHS, P.O. Box 11, Orrville, OH 44667; 330/683-2426 (weekdays 1pm-5pm); *www.orrvillerailroad.com.*

CONWAY SCENIC RAILROAD (P.O. Box 1947, North Conway, NH 03860; 800/232-5251; www.conwayscenic.com) will hold the following special events. Contact the railroad for details.

- **August 6,** 27th Birthday Celebration of Conway Scenic.
- **October 13-14,** Railfan Days (call for special reservation form).
- **October 20-21 and 27-28,** Pumpkin Patch Run.
- **December 1-2, 8-9 and 15-16,** Santa Claus Express.
- **November 29-30, December 1-2, 6-9, 13-16 and 20-21,** Polar Express.

SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA, August 10-12. Alco/DL&W celebration on GVT's Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western and the 100th Anniversary of the American Locomotive Company. Events include a Friday night slide show at the Electric City Trolley Museum adjacent to Steamtown. Saturday features a static display of seven different Alco models, followed by an excursion featuring two RS3s on a photo freight over the DL&W Pocono Main. Night photo spectacular features D&H Alcos posed under DL&W 426 at Bridge 60. Sunday morning trip features two RS3s on the Carbondale line. Tickets $130 covers all Saturday and Sunday activities (Friday show $15 extra), capacity limited to 125 people. For more information get on the mailing list by sending an e-mail to *DL&W-ALCO-DAYS@gvtrail.com* or phone 716/343-5398.

BLUEWATER MICHIGAN CHAPTER NRHS (P.O. Box 296, Royal Oak, MI 48068; 248/541-1000 or 800/594-5162; *www.BluewaterNRHS.com*) offers the following rail events. Please write or call for information.

- **August 11,** Marlette-Millington-Denmark Junction rare mileage excursion on ex-Pere Marquette and NYC lines; $6-$35 plus optional shuttle from Dearborn and Royal Oak ($15).
- **August 14-18,** Tour of the Lines, both Algoma Central and Ontario Northland; visit Sault Ste. Marie, Hearst, Cochrane, Moosonee, Moose Factory Island, Toronto; price depends on options selected.
- **September 15-17,** Agawa Canyon Color Tour in dome coaches plus Soo Locks dinner cruise; all meals, hotel, bus from Dearborn and Royal Oak; $355-$465.
- **November 2,** Annual banquet featuring rail photographer Ron Cady; $20 before October 2nd, $25 thereafter.
- **December 7-9,** Christmas in Toronto by VIA Rail; originates in Dearborn, includes bus, train, hotel, banquet, chartered PCC tour, VIA-1 return; $375-$420.

MONTICELLO RAILWAY MUSEUM (P.O. Box 401, Monticello, IL 61856; 217/762-9011; *www.prairienet.org/mrm*) will hold the following special events. Call or write for information.

- **August 11-12,** Caboose Trains with multiple cabooses.
- **September 15-16,** Illinois Central Railroad Days celebrating 150th Anniversary of the IC; passenger and freight trains with IC equipment and special displays.
- **October 20-21 and 26-28,** Ghost Train ride through Haunted Hollow.
- **December 1-2,** Lunch with Santa (reservations required).

RAILCAMP will be offered by the National Railway Historical Society and the National Park Service at Steamtown National Historic Site from **August 12-18.** Campers will receive detailed instruction on various restoration skills, roundhouse operations, railroad operations, historic interpretation and a whole host of subjects connected with maintaining and promoting railroading's rich heritage. RailCamp is open to students entering the 9th grade through finishing the 12th grade in 2001. Tuition is $550 per student, which includes instruction, meals and lodging. For more information contact RailCamp 2001, National Railway Historical Society, P.O. Box 58547, Philadelphia, PA 19102-8547; 215/557-6606; *nrhs@compuserv.com.*

FRIENDS OF THE RAILROAD MUSEUM OF PENNSYLVANIA (P.O. Box 125, Strasburg, PA 17579; 717/687-8628; *frm@redrose.net; www.rrmuseumpa.org*) will hold the following special events at the museum in Strasburg. Regular admission charged for all special events unless noted. Call or write for complete information.

- **August 16-19,** Railroad Circus Days with model circus trains, equipemt and performances displayed by the Circus Model Builders International.
- **October 12, 13, 19, 20, 26, 27,** Tricks, Trains & Treats with ghostly tales at the museum and a ride on the Strasburg Rail Road. Tickets $15.95, $9.95 kids 3-11.
- **November 10,** Trains and Troops featuring exhibits exhibits and displays on the role railroads played in the defense of our nation.
- **December 26,** Home for the Holidays with a nostalgic glimpse at 100 yeras of holiday rail travel; meet engineers, conductors, ticket agents and passengers.

RAIL TRAVEL CENTER (139 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT 5301; 800/458-5394; *www.railtravelcenter.com*) will run the following special trips. Call or write for full details.

- **August 16-20,** Amish Rails featuring Strasburg Rail Road, Black River & Western, museums and more.
- **August 20-30,** Keystone Historical Rail Tour featuring New Hope & Ivyland, Wanamaker, Kempton & Southern, Gettysburg, East Broad Top, Horseshoe Curve and more.
- **August 22-September 3,** Wilderness Trains of the Great Lakes featuring Amtrak's *Empire Builder,* North Shore Scenic, *Minnesota Zephyr,* Algoma Central to Hearst, South Simcoe Railway and more.
- **September 3-14,** Alaska Cruise/Rail Tour featuring White Pass & Yukon, Alaska Railroad, more.
- **September 20-23,** Smithsonian Streamliner Weekend to Chicago on the *Capitol Limited* and *Cardinal* from Washington.
- **October 3-14,** Grand Fall Tour of New England featuring Winnepesauke Railroad, Hobo Railroad, White Mountain Central, Conway Scenic, Mount Washington Cog, Green Mountain and Amtrak's *Vermonter.*
- **October 6-13,** Riverbarge Excursion Rivers to Rails featuring cruise of the Ohio and Kanawha Rivers and Amtrak's *Cardinal.*
- **October 6-13,** Hudson Bay/Polar Bear Explorer featuring Via's *Northern Spirit* and bear photo safari.
- **October 13-18,** Bluegrass Autumn Reunion featuring Bluegrass

Scenic, Kentucky Railway Museum, Indiana Transportation Museum and French Lick, West Baden & Southern.

October 18-30, Ozark Autumn Tour featuring St. Louis light rail, St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern, Amtrak's *Ann Rutledge* and *Heartland Flyer*, Branson Scenic, Silver Dollar City, Eureka Springs & North Arkansas, Arkansas & Missouri, National Museum of Transportation and more.

Rail Travel Center also books the Montana Rockies Daylight, Royal Canadian Pacific and other luxury rail tours. Write or phone for information.

BURNET, TEXAS, August 18-19. Texas Hill Country Railfair & Festival sponsored by the Austin Steam Train Association. Ride the *Hill Country Flyer* to the railroad memorabilia show in Burnet. Local rail travel from Burnet to 1912 depot in Bertram with *Flyer* meets and photo opportunities available. For more information contact the Austin Steam Train Association, P.O. Box 1632, Austin, TX 78767; 512/477-8468; *www.atcrr.com.*

DURANGO, COLORADO, August 22-27. Railfest on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. Visiting equipment includes Eureka & Palisade No.4 and three Galloping Geese. Events include numerous runs with all equipmnt, evening photo shoot with the Geese, wine & cheese receptions, more. For a complete list of all activities contact the railroad at 970/247-2733 or visit *www.durangotrain.com.*

ELY, NEVADA, August 24-27. Photo workshop at the Nevada Northern's facilities with complete access and photographic freedom from dawn to dusk each day. Optional steam and diesel trips available. Photographer Stanley W. Trzoniec will host the workshop. For more information contact Classic PhotoWorkshops, 58 West Main Street, Northboro, MA 01532; 508/393-3800; *fotoclass@aol.com.*

WEST CHESTER, PENNSYLVANIA, August 25. Night Photo Ride on the West Chester Railroad geaturing GP9 99 and RS18 1803. Photo stops along the WCRR, lighting provided by Kermit Geary, Jr. Train departs Market Street in West Chester at 9pm. Tickets $15 from Four States Railway Services, Inc., P.O. Box 385, Yorklyn, DE 19736. Information phone 610/430-2233 or visit *westchesterrr.net.*

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, August 26. Special excursion on the New York Subway using 1925 BMT Triplex articulated cars. Out of service and rare trackage will be covered, including freight trackage with cars pulled by South Brooklyn diesels. Train leaves Chambers Street Station of the J line at 10:30am. Fare $35, kids under 13 $20. Proceeds benefit the March of Dimes. Information from NYCT March of Dimes Trip, 1311 Waters Place, Room 221, Bronx, NY 10461; 347/643-5311.z

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NEW YORK, NEW YORK, August 31-September 3. New England Jaunt sponsored by the New York Railroad Enthusiasts. Trip includes Amtrak Acela to Providence, tour of Newport, Newport Dinner Train, Edaville, Plimouth Plantation, more. Fare $550 double occupancy, $670 single, seniors over 65 deduct $15. Tickets from New York Railroad Enthusiasts, c/o Steve Kaika, 315 Atlantic Avenue, Apt. 2K, East Rockaway, NY 11518-1105.

LEATHERSTOCKING RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY (P.O. Box 681, Oneonta, NY 13820; 607/432-2429; www.lrhs.org) will hold the following special events on the Cooperstown & Charlotte Valley Railroad in Milford, N.Y. Contact the Society for complete information.

September 1, Moonlight Train Ride with live music, refreshments; trip departs 8pm, reservations required; fare $10, seniors $9, kids 4-12 $7, under 4 free.

September 1-3, Labor Day Weekend Workers' Special; all workers ride regular trains for half price with proof of employment.

September 15, Leatherstocking Jucntion Function Western Jubilee with fine dining, live entertainment, train ride, silent auction, all you can eat and drink for $100 (reservations required); proceeds benefit local charities.

October 6, Oktoberfest train ride with food beer and music; Fare $25, seniors $20, kids 4-12 $15, under 4 free; reservations required.

October 8, Columbus Day Fall Foliage Excursions, two trips; Fare $8, seniors $7, kids 4-12 $5, under 4 free.

October 19-20 and 26-27, Haunted Halloween Express with refreshments; fare $10, seniors $9, kids 4-12 $7, under 4 free; reservations required.

FELTON, CALIFORNIA, September 1-3. Summer Sampler at the Roaring Camp Railroads with a sampling of the best historic reenactments including train robberies, tapper and trader encampment, operating steam saw mill, historic rail equipment, handcar rides and more. For more information phone 831/335-4484 or visit *www.roaringcamp.com.*

STEAMTOWN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE in Scranton, Pa., will hold the following special events. For more details call the park at 888/693-9391.

September 1-3, Rail Expo 2001 with visiting rail equipment, excursions, tours and exhibits.

November 23-24, Toys for Tots Santa Train, kids bringing a new unwrapped toy ride free with Santa.

GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN, September 1-7. Amtrak group tour aboard the Empire Builder to the Izaak Walton Inn at Essex, Mont., hosted by the National Railroad Museum. Trip includes two nights sleeping accomodations on Amtrak and four nights at Essex. For information and pricing contact Tim Tennant or Charles Schuetz at the National Railroad Museum, 2285 South Broadway, Green Bay, WI 54303-4832; 920/437-7623; *tstennant@nationalrrmuseum.org.*

TRAINS UNLIMITED, TOURS (P.O. Box 1997, Portola, CA 96122; 800/359-4870; *info@trainsunltdtours.com*) will sponsor the following events. Call or write for complete details.

September 7-19, Inside Passage, White Pass & Northern Wilderness includes cruising the Inside Passage *(see separate listing).*

September 10-18, Fall Northern Wilderness RDC trip over BC Rail from Vancouver *(see separate listing).*

September 15-18, White Pass Steam Spectacular with chartered double-header on passenger, freight and mixed consists *(see separate listing).*

September 22-29, New England Fall Colors Rail Adventure in Massachusetts and New Hampshire *(see separate listing).*

September 27-28, Rio Grande Spectacular charter photo freight on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic *(see separate listing).*

October 6-8, Wisconsin Fall Colors Rail Cruise on the Wisconsin & Southern *(see separate listing).*

ALASKA/BRITISH COLUMBIA TOUR will run September 7-19. Combines an Inside Passage cruise with six rail trips including the White Pass & Yukon Route and BC Rail. Prices start at $1945. For more information contact Trains Unlimited, Tours, P.O. Box 1997, Portola, CA 96122; 800/359-4870; *info@trainsunltdtours.com.*

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, September 8. Country Hoedown Excursion Train to Watertown, Tenn., sponsored by the Tennessee Central Railway Museum. 90-mile round-trip to street and craft festival. Fare $26, kids under 12 $15, first class $32, dome seating $50. Order tickets from TCRy Museum, 220 Willow Street, Nashville, TN 37210-2159; 615/244-9001; MC/Visa/Discover accepted.

WHIPPANY, NEW JERSEY, September 8-9. Spirits of the Old West Express at the Whippany Railway Museum. Train robberies by the Whippany River Gang. Trains depart hourly 1pm-4pm. Fare $8, kids under 12 $5, babes-in-arms free. Reservations strongly recommended. For tickets or information contact the Whippany Railway Museum, 1 Railroad Plaza, P.O. Box 16, Whippany, NJ 07981-0016; 973/887-8177; *www.WhippanyRailwayMuseum.org.*

NORTH VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, September 10-18. RDC trip over entire BC Rail system to Fort Nelson. Plenty of photo stops each day in spectacular fall colors. Prices start at $1945. For more information contact Trains Unlimited, Tours, P.O. Box 1997, Portola, CA 96122; 800/359-4870; *info@trainsunltdtours.com.*

NORTH VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, September 10-18. Combination of the BC Rail RDC trip (see listing above) and the White Pass Steam Spectacular (see listing below). Ride the northbound BC Rail trip, then connect via motorcoach to Skagway. Prices start at $2345. For more information contact Trains Unlimited, Tours, P.O. Box 1997, Portola, CA 96122; 800/359-4870; *info@trainsunltdtours.com.*

SKAGWAY, ALASKA, September 15-18. White Pas Steam Spectacular with two steam locomotives on the White Pass & Yukon Route. Double-headed steam to Fraser, five chartered trains total with passenger, freight and mixed consists. Prices start at $1300. For more information contact Trains Unlimited, Tours, P.O. Box 1997, Portola, CA 96122; 800/359-4870; *info@trainsunltdtours.com.*

BLACK RIVER & WESTERN RAILROAD (P.O. Box 200, Ringoes, NJ 08551; 908/782-6622; www.brwrr.com) will hold the following special events. Fares for all trips (uexcept mixed train) are $8 adults, $4 kids 3-12, under 3 free. Contact the railroad for full information.

September 15-16, Great Train Robbery.

October 27-28, Halloween Special.

November 23-25, December 1-2 and 8-9, Santa Express.

NEW ENGLAND FALL COLORS RAIL ADVENTURE will operate September 22-29, covering the Mount Washington Cog Railway, Hobo Railroad, Conway Scenic and more. Prices start at $1795. For more information contact Trains Unlimited, Tours, P.O. Box 1997, Portola, CA 96122; 800/359-4870; *info@trainsunltdtours.com.*

CHAMA, NEW MEXICO, September 27-28. Rio Grande Spectacular on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad using K-36 and K-37 2-8-2s, freight train with all equipment lettered Rio Grande. Plenty of photo runbys. Prices start at $308 and include two box lunches and overnight lodging in Antonito. For more information contact Trains Unlimited, Tours, P.O. Box 1997, Portola, CA 96122; 800/359-4870; *info@trainsunltdtours.com.*

TENNESSEE VALLEY RAILROAD at Chattanooga will sponsor the following excursions into northwest Georgia via ex-Central of Georgia trackage. Many trips include a dining car meal. Ticket prices range from $41 to $84. Call the museum at 423/894-8028 for complete details.

September 29, LaFayette Fly-In.

October 6, 13, 20, 21, 27, 28 and November 3, Autumn Leaf Specials to Summerville.

December 15, Christmas Special to Chickamauga.

EAST HAVEN, CONNECTICUT, September 29-30. Shore Line Trolley Museum remembers the days of the Subway Series between New York's baseball teams with trolleys and rapid transit cars including an 1892 Manhattan cable car, a century-old "Trolley Dodger" trolley from Brooklyn and vintage IRT/BMT rapid transit cars. Plenty of photo opportunities. Museum admission $6, seniors $5, kids 2-15 $3 (includes unlimited rides). For more information phone 203/467-6927 or visit *www.bera.org.*

TAMPA, FLORIDA, October 4-7. Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Air Line Railroads Historical Society Annual Meeting at the Best Western Hotel & Conference Center. Events include bus tours to the "Bone Valley" phosphate operations and the

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NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, October 6 and 13. Excursions to Watertown, Tenn., sponsored by the Tennessee Central Railway Museum. October 6th trip features train robbery and a visit to Watertown Railway Days events. October 13 features live music in Watertown, plus fall foliage. Fare $28, kids under 12 $15, first class $35, dome seating $55. Order tickets from TCRy Museum, 220 Willow Street, Nashville, TN 37210-2159; 615/244-9001; MC/Visa/Discover accepted.

SOUTH CAROLINA RAILROAD MUSEUM (P.O. Box 643, Winnsboro, SC 29180; 803/635-9893; *www.scrm.org*) will hold the following special events in 2001.
October 6, Caboose Day, ride in one of the museum's cabeese.
October 20, Fall Harvest Specials.
October 27, Member's Day, members ride free (new memberships accepted on day of event).
November 24-25 and December 1-2, Santa Claus trains.

ROCKHILL FURNACE, PENNSYLVANIA, October 6-7. East Broad Top Railroad Fall Spectacular featuring four operating narrow gauge steam locomotives, gas-electric doodlebug M-1, variety of special trains each day. Special tickets required for all trains and guided tours of EBT shop complex. For more information contact the East Broad Top Railroad, P.O. Box 158, Rockhill Furnace, PA 17294; 814/447-3011.

ORBISONIA/ROBERTSDALE, PENNSYLVANIA, October 6-7. Friends of the East Broad Top 19th Fall Reunion featuring EBT-oriented walking and driving tours, model contests, exhibits, vendors and more. Public welcome to visit displays and Sunday morning open house at the FEBT Museum in Robertsdale at no charge; participation in other activities requires paid registration. For more information contact Pat Downs, 3416 Lowell Drive, Columbus, OH 43204; 614/351-7338; *ebtsteam@columbus.rr.com; www.febt.org.*

ROCKHILL FURNACE, PENNSYLVANIA, October 6. Night photo session at the East Broad Top Railroad with R&R's Steve Barry. Details still being worked out at press time, but locomotive No.17 is requested for the evening. More details next month or visit *www.daylightimages.com/ebtnight.html* for updated information.

PERRIS, CALIFORNIA, October 6-7. Trainfair at the Orange Empire Railway Museum featuring many trains and trolleys, kids activities, displays, live entertainment. Admission $12 adults, $8 kids 5-11, under 5 free. For more information contact the Orange Empire Railway Museum, 2201 South "A" Street, Perris, CA 92570; 909/657-2605 or 909/943-3020; *www.oerm.org.*

WAUKESHA, WISCONSIN, October 6-8. Wisconsin Fall Colors Rail Cruise over Wisconsin & Southern using E-units and the streamlined VIP train to Prairie du Chien. Three-day trip includes a full day in Prairie du Chien, with options including the Mid-Continent Railway Museum, main line railfanning or family-oriented activities. Prices start at $174 for adults, $74 for children (does not include lodging). For more information contact Trains Unlimited, Tours, P.O. Box 1997, Portola, CA 96122; 800/359-4870; *info@trainsunltdtours.com.*

WHIPPANY, NEW JERSEY, October 7. Pumpkin Festival at the Whippany Railway Museum, featuring frequent departures of the "Pumpkinliner" cabeese between 12 [illegible]. Other attractions include crafts [illegible] and railroad [illegible] dealers. For more information contact the Whippany Railway Museum, P.O. Box 16, Whippany, NJ 07981-016; 973/887-8177; *www.WhippanyRailwayMuseum.org.*

ORRVILLE, OHIO, October 13 Medina Loop Express fall foliage circle trip sponsored by the Orrville Railroad Heritage Society. Outbound trip operates via Browster, Canton, Hartville, Mogadore and Akron. Layover in Medina for sightseeing, lunch and shopping. Return trip via Spencer. Fare $55 adults, $45 kids under 12, first class $110. Tickets available from ORHS, P.O. Box 11, Orrville, OH 44667; 330/683-2426 (weekdays 1pm-5pm); *www.orrvillerailroad.com.*

CUMBERLAND, RHODE ISLAND, October 13. Narrated fall foliage scenic tour of the Blackstone River Valley on the Providence & Worcester Railroad with a four-hour roundtrip to Worcester, Mass. Tickets $34 adults, $15.95 kids under 12. For tickets or information contact the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, 175 Main Street, Pawtucket, RI 02860; 401/724-2200; *bvtourism@aol.com.*

FORT BRAGG, CALIFORNIA, October 14. Steam in the Redwoods sponsored by the Central Coast Chapter NRHS on the California Western with 2-8-2 No.45 leading an 80-mile round trip on three percent grades in through remote parts of California's Redwoods. Fare $99 (includes box lunch); three photo stops planned. Optional charter bus/hotel package available from San Jose, Emeryville and San Francisco. Train leaves Fort Bragg at 8am. Tickets/information from Central Coast Chapter NRHS, P.O. Box 8167, San Jose, CA 95155; 408/278-5051; *www.goldenstaterails.com.*

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, October 27. Fall Foliage Excursion Train to Cookeville, Tenn., sponsored by the Tennessee Central Railway Museum. Train will travel through the Caney Fork River Valley, past the bluffs at Sebowisha and ascend Silver Point Hill. Fare $48, kids under 12 $24, first class $65, dome seating sold out. Order tickets from TCRy Museum, 220 Willow Street, Nashville, TN 37210-2159; 615/244-9001; MC/Visa/Discover accepted.

WHIPPANY, NEW JERSEY, October 27-28. Halloween Express at the Whippany Railway Museum, with departures of the spooky train hourly from 1pm-4pm. Fare $8, kids under 12 $5, babes-in-arms free. Mail order reservations strongly recommended (indicate first and second choices for date and preferred departure time). For more information contact the Whippany Railway Museum, P.O. Box 16, Whippany, NJ 07981-016; 973/887-8177; *www.WhippanyRailwayMuseum.org.*

FELTON, CALIFORNIA, October 31. Ghost Train on the Roaring Camp Railroads. Relive the Legend of Sleepy Hollow. Up to two children in costume ride free with each paying adult ($25) on each steam excursion. First train departs 6pm, hourly thereafter; reservations required. For more information phone 831/335-4484 or visit *www.roaringcamp.com.*

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, November 4-13. Special ARM/TRAIN Convention private car roundtrip to Salisbury, N.C. behind the *Capitol Limited* and *Carolinian* with private cars *Lac Vieux Desert, Palm Beach* and *Cimarron River.* Sleeping accomodations, meals, beverages and transfers in Salisbury included. For information and pricing contact Tim Tennant or Charles Schuetz at the National Railroad Museum, 2285 South Broadway, Green Bay, WI 54304-4832; 920/437-7623; *tstennant@nationalrailroadmuseum.org.*

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New product news and reviews

Calendar Call

If your group or company publishes a rail calendar and would like to have the 2002 edition considered for review, send a copy to: RAILFAN & RAILROAD, Calendar Call, P.O. Box 700, Newton, N.J. 07860-0700.

The ***Tehachapi 2002*** calendar features twelve creative, full-color images of modern railroading in Tehachapi Pass. The cover features an excellent aerial view of the loop in springtime. Other images include a freshly-painted Santa Fe FP45 shot broadside in full sun with a dark hillside and sky, two shots of UP and SP units in the snow, and nice mood shots taken at twilight and at night. An informative story about the Loop Ranch features 1936 and 1999 photos taken from the exact same location; it's interesting to see how many of the small oaks on the hill survived over 63 years. Opening to 11"×17", ***Tehachapi 2002*** is available from Burton-Delvers Publications, 26848 Woodford-Tehachapi Road, P.O. Box 189, Keene, CA 93531-0189; 661/822-1485; fax 661/822-3066; email *trainjunky@starband.net*. The price is $9.95 plus $2.20 shipping; California residents add 7% sales tax.

BOOK REVIEW

Set Up Running: The Life of a Pennsylvania Railroad Engineman, 1904-1949.

By John W. Orr, introduction by James D. Porterfield. The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, PA 16802-1003 *www.psu.edu/psupress*. Hard cover, 376 pages, $38.50.

Most railroad books typically marketed to railfans these days fall into one of two categories: lavishly illustrated essays or photo collections, or dry accounts of railroad history or technology. The human side of railroading, however richly covered in fiction and fact by the RAILROAD magazine of old, rarely sees print. Thus, it was a true delight to stumble upon this biographical account of a Pennsylvania Railroad engineer on the book shelves recently. I was even more delighted to find that it dealt with railroading on my native turf and my native railroad.

Set Up Running (the title refers to the PRR expression for being promoted to engineer) is the story of Oscar P. Orr and his service with the Pennsylvania Railroad from his employment at the age of 21 in 1904 to his retirement in 1949, as recounted by his son, John. "O.P.," as he was called on the railroad, lived in Ralston, Pennsylvania, and primarily operated trains out of Williamsport for most of his career, with a map of his turf stretching from Altoona to Wilkes-Barre and from Enola and Harrisburg north to Southport, New York, (on the Elmira Branch) and Renovo, Pennsylvania. Most of his career was spent on the fabled Bald Eagle line between Tyrone and Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, a seriously under-rated piece of heavy duty railroading in its day.

Rather than a glamorized, rosy look at the days of steam, the accounts of O.P. and John reveal railroading as seen through the eyes of those who handled and lived with the railroad day after day. O.P. was apparently well-known for pulling no punches in his criticisms, as the book tells of many instances where Altoona motive power personnel asked Orr to work a locomotive fresh from the shops and report his findings. The ponderous I1s Decapods are portrayed as the rough-riding brutes with woefully inadequate tenders that PRR enginemen knew them to be, whereas the big L1s 2-8-2 is perceived as a favorite at times.

This book is an all-too-rare social history of the lives of both the railroader and his family. The tale shifts several times from the story of O.P. to the first-hand accounts of his son, who gets the opportunity to quiz his father to no end on railroad happenings and also to linger deep within the railroad environment in a way modern railfans could only dream of — short cab rides, trying to imitate his father's distinctive whistle style and so forth.

In its attempt to be a sociological account as well as a rail enthusiast account, the book has one problem: It seems all but impossible for such a story to be written without wading deeply into the jargon of railroading, and the "dialect" of the PRR is thick with terms such as "cabin" (caboose) and "snapper" (a helper locomotive added to the front of the train). Although an eight-page glossary is appended to the book, I still found myself wondering if anyone raised outside of railroading in central Pennsylvania would be bogged down by the text. On the other hand, such a work is a prime example of the real railroad vernacular for any PRR fans wishing for total immersion in the dialect.

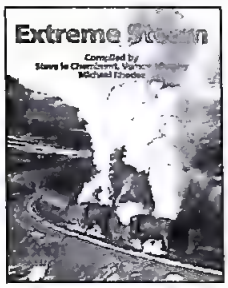
Readers looking for a book of folksy and amusing anecdotes like those of Ed King and Doug Riddell may be disappointed. Railroading is, at its heart, a grueling and mundane work environment, which much of this book reflects. Those accustomed to normal workdays and weeks will be astounded at the long hours and massive amount of time Orr spent away from home even as he was near the top of the seniority list. Also shown are the difficult choices O.P. has to make when he is sidelined by high blood pressure, and the choices he is forced to make between well-paying assignments and time with his family. There are tales of fatalities on the job, firemen good and bad, of running at speed in a blinding snowstorm and even an ingenious, if nefarious, technique to save time on a regular run with an inadequate tender by finding a way to bypass the last coaling stop and arrive in time for a better return trip home.

Though it's not the most thrilling biography to grace the bookstore shelves, *Set Up Running* is a must-read for the Pennsy fan, and a truly rare treasure for those wanting to know the lives of the men

who truly kept American steam locomotives running. — *ALEXANDER D. MITCHELL IV*

Extreme Steam

By Steve le Cherminant, Vernon Murphy and Michael Rhodes; Tele Rail Publications, 9A New Street, Carnforth, Lancashire, England LA5 9BX; 128 9½" × 11½" pages; full color. $39.95 plus $4.00 shipping from U.S. distributor Goodheart Productions, P.O. Box 47131-R, Chicago, Illinois 60647; 800/482-1522; *www.goodheartvideo.com*



In a recent issue of another popular rail publication, consummate Washington columnist, insider and pundit Don Phillips advised that to relive (or witness for the first time) the zenith of the main line American steam experience, one must get one's buns to China. This is the last place on the planet, barring a Jurassic Park, where what was then is now — regular service heavy freight action, no fan trips. Three British photographers traveled repeatedly to the remaining main line steam centers in China over the last few years and published a book of remarkable images taken under extreme weather conditions, otherwise known as clear and bitter cold. With locomotives and rolling stock that look remarkably North American running in a landscape that looks like the Rocky Mountain west, they have captured exquisite images which we wish we could shoot today in the U.S.

Carefully selected images, often printed one to a page, were made with various focal length lenses, lighting conditions, compositions and scenic backdrops, conveying a mood few have had the chance to witness. Snow, fluffy smoke against clear skies, side- and back-lighting, and sweeping vistas are common in this book. All but the most parochial readers will envision themselves on a clear winter day in Utah or Montana, on Sherman Hill or Donner Pass or the grades of the Alleghenies when steam was king. The main areas covered include Yebaishou, Chengde, Mundanjiang, Zhongwei, the Jitong line (built in 1995, mind you, and still all steam), Nancha, Baotou, some narrow gauge and a steel mill. Captions are short and factual, not flowery in the Beebe style, and the images speak for themselves.

The reproduction is outstanding. To my taste, maybe ten images are not 100% perfect, but this does not detract from the look and feel of the work, which is excellent. For those who want to see the book come alive, a companion video tape is offered by the publishers (Volume 6 in the "Vanishing World Steam" series), also available through Goodheart. (Volume 1 also has shots of the Chengde steel works branch.

If you want to be surrounded by hard-working, often doubleheaded 2-10-2s and 2-8-2s which look very American, make the pilgrimage before it is too late. A few days on Jinpeng Pass will renew your faith. If you can't go, buy this book and the videos. All steam enthusiasts should have this book as a reminder of the fascination of the machine, and to document how long steam traction lasted. — *TOM KELCEC*

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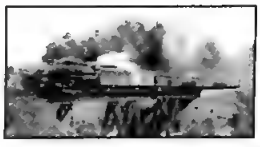

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The Engineer's Seat

Recollections on life in the cab

by THOMAS D. DRESSLER

Experience

MOST RAILFANS and model railroaders don't really have much of an idea what actually takes place when one boards a locomotive. Probably 99 percent think they know, but in reality they indubitably do *not*. Believe me, this is the voice of experience speaking — I know for a fact most don't know, since I was one such railfan and modeler! I just thought I knew, but I very soon found out I knew next to nothing. Oh yes, I knew the types and numbers of locomotives, I knew the signals and was doing my best to learn the Norfolk & Western Book of Rules. But when push came to shove, I was probably dumber than the proverbial coal bucket.

An article in one of the model magazines a few years back, discussing the various appliances and devices of freight cars, especially the "A" and "B" ends of such cars, brought something to mind that happened to me shortly after I hired on the N&W as a fireman way back in 1970. It also reminded me that if you can't laugh at yourself, then at whom can you laugh?

Being a life-long train enthusiast, both model and prototype, when the time came to look for employment after losing my job in the local steel mill, I applied for a position as fireman with the N&W. To my way of thinking, if I had to start all over I might as well go for the dream job of most modelers and railfans — engine service on my favorite railroad, the N&W. I passed the physical, was hired, made my student trips and then marked up on the firemen's extra board in my home town of Portsmouth, Ohio. Entering engine service on the N&W was pretty close to heaven for me.

That first summer, I was really green. Oh yes, I certainly thought I knew all about real railroading after 30 years of modeling and watching from trackside, but I soon found out exactly how little I really knew about the prototype. Being a gung-ho new employee, I was hot to trot, so to speak, and I wanted to run all the time and did so at each and every opportunity. I wanted that right-hand seat so badly I could taste it. Thankfully, many of the older, more experienced hoggers were eager to let me run, which gave them a chance to relax a little while keeping an eye on the "new guy." Of course they were trying to teach me the fine art of train handling at the same time, and were not the least bit bashful in pointing out my mistakes.

On this particular day, I was firing for "Big Daddy" Gail Taylor, one of the better engineers on the "Valley" or Columbus District of the Scioto Division of the N&W. Gail stood about six-foot-five and tipped the scales at very close to 300 pounds; his nickname was quite deserved. Gail, who has since gone on to the Great Roundhouse in the Sky, was an excellent train handler and knew exactly how to handle the automatic air brake in all situations. And by the way, he had been the engineer on one of the two test runs N&W's experimental steam turbine electric (STEL) *Jawn Henry* made up the Valley.

Gail and I were called for a westbound time freight "xtra" out of Portsmouth in the early afternoon with good power — two SD45s and a lonesome GP9 as a booster unit, a train consist of 125 cars (including about 40 long cars) of mixed time freight with a 35 car setoff at Glen Jean, 30 miles north of Portsmouth at our interchange with the Detroit, Toledo & Ironton. Gail let me run out of Portsmouth, and the train was a good one. Excellent power, good pickup speed, easy handling. And I assumed — wrongfully — that the dynamic brakes were working to perfection.

I had her wound up and really rolling, right on the speed board at 45 for the tight curve around Johnson's bridge at Gregg, Ohio. (Gregg is that spot in the old railway atlases where the N&W, C&O and DT&I are shown as being within 50 feet of each other. Following completion of the C&O's Limeville bridge across the Beautiful Ohio at Sciotoville in 1917, and until their own line was built to the Hocking Valley [thus the name "Valley Crossing"] connection at the south edge of Columbus in 1927, all C&O "Northern" trains used N&W tracks).

At this point, I had about a mile to get her down to under ten miles an hour to allow the head brakeman to drop off, line switches and make the cut for the setoff move to the DT&I. I eased the throttle down to idle, waited the required ten seconds and then latched the selector lever into dynamic braking (DB) and slowly eased back on the throttle (on those older units, the throttle and dynamic braking levers were one and the same). However, the DB was not working properly on the two SD45s and my speed did not drop as I had expected. I barely had enough braking power to get the slack bunched in my train!

At this point I grabbed the automatic brake handle and made a twelve-pound reduction in the brake pipe pressure. I felt this would slow the train down to the correct speed, but here my lack of experience presented a *huge* problem.

Instead of coming to a complete stop, as I should have with such a long train to allow the brakes to release, I released the train brakes and gave her about four notches on the throttle. All the while Engineer Taylor was standing about half way up out of his seat and was shouting "No! No!" and a few other choice unprintable words. I was wondering what in the world possessed him to be acting like that. I "knew" there was nothing wrong with what I was doing but I most assuredly was about to find out — in one a heck of a hurry. I heard a loud rush of air, then *wham* as the engines and the first car began to decelerate rapidly. I still didn't know what I had done.

I looked over at Gail in the fireman's seat — he had reseated himself, shaking his head and mumbling about my ancestry. About that time, there was a loud crash and a fairly hard wallop and then engines and first car bounced forward several yards. I

then dared a rearwards glance towards the head man, who had dropped off the engines and was pointing to the rear of the first car. I then realized there was about a two carlength gap between the rear end of the first car and the front end of the second. It finally hit me, squarely between the eyes, that I had done something wrong, but I still didn't understand what!

I climbed down from the engines and walked back to where the brakie was standing, laughing at me and chiding me on my exceptional expertise in train handling. I then noticed the busted knuckle on the east end of the first car behind the engines, a high-cube auto-parts box car. It was shattered in to at least four pieces, each break all bright and shiny indicating it was a fresh break and not one that could be blamed on a old fracture or two. (Had it been an old break, those areas would have been covered with rust).

In what I later realized was a learning experience, all of this was being pointed out for my benefit. The head man pointed to the largest piece of the E-70 knuckle laying between the rails and brought to my attention the heavy scuff mark thereon. He explained that when the rear end ran forward and hit the head end, the closed knuckle on the west end of the second car had hit what was left of the knuckle of the first car and shattered it in the final, heart-breaking mess. You think it was not heartbreaking? I had only been on the N&W a few short weeks and here was my very first broken knuckle? You bet it was!

I hung my head in bewilderment and sneaked back to the lead unit, trying not to be too conspicuous, and to my surprise Big Daddy was still in the fireman's seat. I was 99.44% sure he would have replaced me in the engineers' seat. Rather than give me more grief, he took the opportunity to explain in no uncertain terms that the brakes on the train were fully set up (applied) when I made the quick release and gave the engines power. Knuckles will stand only so much pressure, and 124 freight cars stretched out tighter than a banjo string were too much, at which point something had to give — in this instance, the east knuckle on the first car! Some 9950 EMD h.p. was simply too much.

During this time of detailed explanation, the brakie had walked up, retrieved a spare knuckle from the knuckle/log chain rack on the outside walkway of one of the units, and was making quick repairs. The knuckle was soon replaced and we made our setoff to the DT&I with no further problems because of my inexperience. The crew probably used much stronger terms, such as "total stupidity and ignorance" to "Good Lord — and we have to put up with this guy until he retires!"

After we got back on the remainder of our train and were making the brake test, the conductor called on the radio and asked me on which end, "A end or B end" of the car the knuckle had been replaced. Not knowing any better, I replied it was the end towards him. He then mumbled something and was quiet until the dispatcher (DS) contacted us and asked why we were taking so long to make our setoff. The conductor covered for me and told the DS we had gotten a knuckle, but it was a 60% old break. The DS seemed satisfied, and I didn't hear anything more from the rest of the crew.

No, certainly *not.*

Not until we arrived in the register room at the Joyce Avenue Terminal in Columbus. At that particular time every other member of the crew made it his own personal duty to inform me (in no uncertain terms) the difference between the A and B ends of freight cars. (The A end is the non-brake end. The B end has the hand brake. On a box car, with the brake cylinder under the car, the brake cylinder points to the B end. On a hopper car the B end is the end with the brake valve, bleed rod, brake cylinder and retaining valve mounted under the slope sheet of the car).

As we were leaving Glen Jean, I asked Gail what were the "wham" and heavy bump we received shortly after the brakes had gone into an emergency application. It seems the three units and lead car stopped quickly and the rear of the train, even with the brakes fully applied, had enough momentum to ram the head end with a pretty good whop and knock the head end forward several feet, leaving a gap in the train. Over the next 22 years of engine service, I was reminded of that day many, many times over. One soon learned in railroading that you had better laugh at such things or they would ride you unmercifully.

And did I learn anything from that experience? Certainly, and I never did it again. And on up the road, rolling that train downhill into Circleville with no dynamic braking, Big Daddy came over and showed me a little trick — to which I referred in the last installation of this column — of feed valve braking! At the time, I was so green I didn't quite understand such use of the feed valve, but I did learn how to do it later on.

Thankfully, there were not too many more incidents over the next several years of my employment. I didn't realize it at the time, but I had truly learned a major lesson of train handling. Yes, I did snap a few knuckles in my career but only one or two were my fault. Most were a result of a problem in the train. In my 22 years of handling all types of freight trains, excursion steam specials, special moves such as circus trains and time freights with business cars on the rear, I had a very good record.

However, this is assuredly not the end of this impartation of my lack of experience. Several years later, my wife, who at the time was performing her duties as the head nurse on a medical-surgical floor in a local hospital, was in a patient's room, and that person looked at her ID badge and noticed the last name. A weakened, recent surgery-induced voice asked her if she was related to Tommy "Overspeed" Dressler and she replied, "Yes, certainly. He is my beloved husband." He then said, "Well good! Glad to know that. When you get home this afternoon, ask your husband if he ever learned which end of a box car is which".

Of course, figuring she had something on me, she came bursting through the door at 3:30 in the afternoon and asked me in a very ornery manner, "How do you tell which end of a box car is which?" Needless to say, I knew exactly to whom she had been talking. I gave her a nice long explanation of what he was talking about and made it look like I knew what I was doing all along, when in fact I didn't even know the "A" end from the "B" end. I always could fool that woman.

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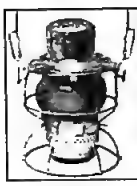

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After all, she married me over 44 years ago, didn't she?

I made many memorable runs with "Big Daddy" over the years. I got my revenge for his picking on me several years later, when one morning we were called for a westbound out of Portsmouth. As we boarded the engines, Gail said, "Hey, hotshot fireboy, get your a-- over there in that ashcat's seat and let the old man show you how it's done." We had hotshot time freight No.77 with two big six axle units, two RS-11s and 87 cars of mixed time freight. Gail made a beautiful highball hotshot run — we were on duty three hours and 30 minutes with a running time for the 98 miles to Joyce Avenue at Columbus of two hours and 19 minutes. ("Time on duty" was from the time you were called to report until you registered off at the end of your run. "Running time" was figured from the moment your wheels turned when you received the highball from the car inspectors following the initial terminal air brake test until you arrived at the yard board of the distant terminal).

Needless to say, Gail bragged about his run and asked if I had learned anything. I didn't say much, but we knew we stood for relay time freight No.86 back east that evening, and I had thoughts of making a good run myself.

We reported at 7:50 p.m. for No.86 with 90 cars and almost the same tonnage as No.77 that morning, and the very same engines we had had westbound. They had run to the huge Bellevue, Ohio terminal and were turned back east. Thank goodness the entire consist had been turned on the wye, so those old junk Alco RS-11's were still on the rear.

As we boarded the units, I said, "Well, old man, get your a-- over in that ashcat's seat and let this hot shot fireboy show you how it's done." Not to brag, of course, but we were on duty three hours and two minutes with a running time of two hours and seven minutes. (Back then, top speed was 65 m.p.h. and these fast runs were possible — if one stretched the speed limit just a little. Later, when speed limits were lowered, about the best one could do was two hours and 30 minutes running time.) Did I crow and rub it in on ol' Big Daddy? You bet your sweet bippy I did.

Did Big Daddy ever mention the day again when I tore the train in two at Glen Jean? Lordy, yes! We discussed it the last trip I made with him! As I've said — railroaders are not prone to let one forget any mistookie — no matter how insignificant.

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RAILROAD AVENUE ENTERPRISES

Lineside Legacy

Preservation and restoration news

by JEFF TERRY

Great Western's "Dinkies"

THE GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY of Loveland, Colorado, was well-known in the 1960s as one of the last places in the U.S. to photograph standard gauge steam in regular freight service. Documented in Gary Morgan's *Sugar Tramp* and Ron Ziel and George H. Foster's *Steam in the Sixties*, Great Western had a fleet of aging 2-8-0s (Nos.51, 60, and 75) and one 2-10-0 (No.90) which hauled sugar beet trains during the annual fall harvest. Not as well known was the fleet of Davenport 0-4-0T saddle tankers — popularly known as "dinkies" — owned by the Great Western Sugar Company and used to switch cars at their refineries in Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming and Montana. By 1975, long after the Great Western Railway's steam was retired and sold, most of the 13 remaining dinkies continued to operate. At the time, they comprised the largest fleet of steam locomotives in freight service anywhere in the U.S.

All but two of GW's 0-4-0T's were acquired second hand, and so each one is a little bit different. Over the years as they were modified and overhauled, they developed a "family" look; most had oversize coal hoppers on the fireman's side, electric headlights, turbogenerators and footboard pilots. All of the 0-4-0T's were set up for one man operation, and all controls (injectors, brakes, throttle, etc.) were within easy reach of the engineer. To my knowledge none of the dinkies, except the one at Scottsbluff, Nebraska, had anything more than steam jam brakes. Air brakes were not needed, as the engines normally only moved two or three cars at a time. Photographs during their last years of service show most dinkies were painted light gray (including the running gear) with "GW" initials.

Why did Great Western retain outdated 0-4-0T's instead of acquiring diesels? The answer lies within the sugar refining process. At the refineries, loaded cars were pushed through a "wet hopper" where steam and hot water jets loosened the frozen beets for unloading. This created a damp environment which would have damaged a diesel locomotive's electrical wiring and traction motors. Thus, the dinkies were retained long after other industrial railroads had sent their steamers out to pasture. It should be noted that a single diesel-mechanical — a Davenport — was modified to combat moisture and used at the Longmont refinery, but a steamer was always kept there on standby.

The dinkies were retired as imported cane sugar replaced beet sugar on America's tables and the sugar factories were closed down one by one. In the early 1980s, GW was acquired by a Texas holding company and today only a few former GW refineries remain in operation, all under the "Western Sugar" name. The last stand for Great Western 0-4-0T's was at Fort Morgan, Colorado, when Davenport 0-4-0T No.13 (a 25-tonner built for the Merritt, Chapman & Scott Corporation of Manistique, Michigan, in April 1929) was fired up during the '83 campaign. That

PHOTOGRAPHY: JEFF TERRY

engine (C/N 2148) last ran for a ceremonial steam-up at the Fort Morgan plant in 1987 and now sits overlooking Main Street. It is a source of pride among Western Sugar employees, often decorated with lights during the Christmas season. Along with No.13 (which was the original Loveland factory engine, moved to Fort Morgan in 1976) there are two other dinkies displayed along Main Street in Fort Morgan. No.2176, a 21-ton 0-4-0T which was the first assigned to Fort Morgan, currently sits outside the

old municipal power plant near Riverside Park and has been repainted from the old gray GW livery to a more "touristy" red and yellow. Built in 1930, No.2176 worked first for the Galesburg Mining Company at Galesburg, Illinois before joining the GW roster in 1939. Well-worn and missing many parts, it has not operated since the early 1970s.

Dinky No.17, first assigned to the Brighton, Colorado, factory, was built in 1923 (Davenport C/N 1950) for the H.D. Conkey Company of Mendota, Illinois, and has been an outdoor exhibit at the Fort Morgan Library and Museum since 1984. It is painted aluminum and sports an oversized cab, added in later years to help engineers peer around loaded beet hoppers. No.17 is missing its headlight and the small four-wheel coal tender which was built by GW shop crews using the frame from scrapped Fairbanks-Morse motor car M-3.

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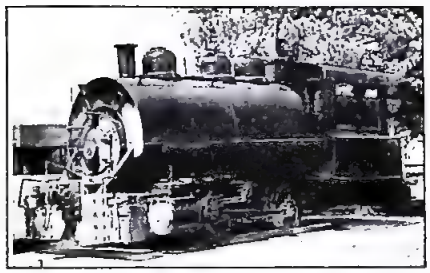
Before the engine was placed on display the tender was sold, but it has been "preserved." Today, what remains of the M-3 frame is underneath a restored streetcar run by the Fort Lincoln Trolley Company of Mandan, North Dakota.

At Sterling, Colorado, is dinky No.2121,



exhibited in the shadow of the town's water tower since 1981, within sight of the GW sugar plant where it labored for so many years. Built in March 1928 for the Newhall Company of Maple Grove, Ohio, and acquired by Great Western in 1931, No.2121 is in poor condition and unfenced.

The Ovid, Colorado, engine, No.2150, was built by Davenport in 1929 as a 36" gauge 0-4-0T for the Corroda & Caliardi Construction Company of Monongahela, Pennsylvania, and was converted to standard gauge in 1943. It was presented to Ovid in 1987 after being stored inside the abandoned sugar factory for years, and today sits at the city park. Protected from vandals with a high fence, the engine is in excellent condition, although its tasteful paint job is somewhat inaccurate. For some reason, it has the number 4109 painted on the number plate and cab. No.2150 is mechanically complete, right down to the steam gauge on the backhead.

Davenport C/N 2089 from the Brush, Colorado, plant is owned and maintained by Ken Kafka at his ranch near Pierce, Colorado. It was in very poor condition and missing several key components (including the drivers) when Kafka purchased it, but he has done a good job cosmetically restoring the 0-4-0T as well as his former GW wood caboose. The missing drivers have been replaced with modified freight car wheels, and the engine has been painted and once again sports the GW logo. No.2089 was originally built in 1928 for the Egyptian Tie & Timber Company of Mill Shoals, Illinois.

Outside Colorado, the former Scottsbluff, Nebraska, dinky, 0-4-0T No.2003 (the largest, at 40 tons) is also in private hands. Ken Layher of Wood River, Nebraska, has restored it to operating condition as "GW No.1" for occasional use on his farm. Also in Nebraska is Davenport 0-4-0T No.29, a 21-ton model which was built new for Great Western in 1924 (C/N 1990) and is displayed near the sugar plant at Mitchell. The fate of the engine that worked the Bayard, Nebraska, factory (Davenport C/N 1988, built in 1930) is unknown, but the other dinky assigned to Bayard, 16-ton C/N 1871, was cannibalized for parts during the 1960s and later scrapped.

South Dakota is home to one dinky, No.7, which was built new for GW in August 1938 as Davenport C/N 2267. It is the former

Gering, Nebraska, engine and today heads up a simulated freight train at "1880 Town" near Murdo. The 0-4-0T sports a diamond stack which was added in a vain attempt to make it appear as a locomotive of the 1880 era, which fools the tourists but not the railfans. Today No.7 is in very poor condition and deserves, at the very least, a new paint job.

Lovell, Wyoming, has in its city park dinky No.2090, outshopped and delivered to the Dewey Cement Company of Davenport, Iowa, in 1927. It came to the Great Western in 1940 and worked at the Lovell plant for the next 40 years before being retired and stored. Interestingly, No.2090 was one of the few dinkies that didn't burn coal; it burned either natural gas or oil as conditions warranted.

No.2123 from the Longmont, Colorado, plant came close to being rebuilt for service when it was purchased in 1978 and moved to the now-defunct Kansas City Railroad Museum. The restoration was halted and the engine sits in pieces, stored in the

Kansas City area. Eventually it may be moved to the Midland Railway at Baldwin City, Kansas, and reassembled for display. No.2123 was noted for its enormous coal bunker, which extended over the cab roof.

One other surviving GW tank engine should be mentioned, although it can't be categorized as a "dinky" per se. Porter 0-6-0T No.3 (built for the Keystone Steel & Wire Company in 1928) last operated at GW's large Billings, Montana factory. It was occasionally steamed up during the 1980s, but is now a static display at the World Museum of Mining in Butte, Montana.

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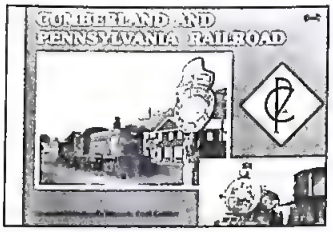

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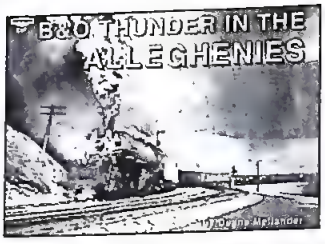

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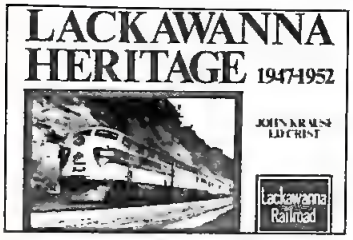

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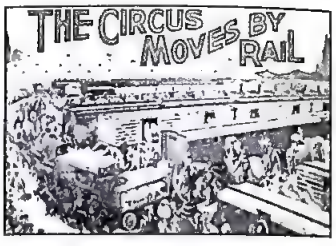

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Videos

Reviews of new releases

BNSF's Abo Canyon

Railway Productions, 8081 South Madison No.243, Indianapolis, IN 46227; 60 min., $19.95 each; color VHS; 800/248-9670; *www.A-Trains.com*; fax 317/889-8144. Indiana residents add 5% sales tax; shipping varies.

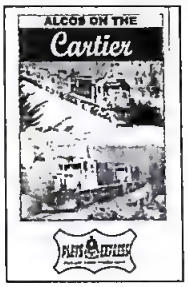
BNSF has several single-track "funnels" in their system other than the well-known one at Sandpoint, Idaho, where an intense concentration of traffic makes for some spectacular train watching. This tape features Abo Canyon, another hot spot located east of Belen and west of Mountainair, New Mexico. Part of a 1908 built shortcut around the Raton Pass line, there has been talk of double-tracking Abo for years. When that happens, some of the classic locations will be altered forever, I am certain. If you visit this short canyon during the right time of the year (fall to spring, when temperatures, the sun and the snakes are all low) you will not be disappointed by the constant parade .

This program begins at the Belen engine terminal and progresses eastward and upgrade, starting with scenes from the overpass in town as trains come and go past the fuel racks. A cab ride in the yard introduces us to the features of a new six-axle GE Dash 9 44CW unit. We relocate to the Rio Grande River bridge, then the scenically challenged area around Madrone and the siding at Sais. I would have skipped much of this myself. An endless parade of stack trains is captured, some in high angle light. We finally enter Abo Canyon and work bridge No.1, where several angles (high, low and broadside) illustrate the photo potential here. Continuing east, we stop at each bridge and major cut for uphill and downhill movements. Some of the angles and lighting are optimum, others less so. After exiting the canyon, we work the now double track line east to Mountainair, most of which is readily accessible from the paralleling highway. The occasional very artfully shot or illuminated scene is surrounded by more pedestrian views, either in angle or in lighting. Throughout, a variety of power is seen, rarely ATSF or BNSF matched, more often than not a mix of various roads and lessors, and multiple paint schemes.

Technically, the image quality is professional, with some occasional wind noise that detracts a bit and a few editing glitches. In several instances I would have framed the shot differently, waited for different lighting conditions, or hiked more off the right-of-way to engage more of the scenery, since a few of the traditional angles we have seen published in print are missing. However, this tape accurately depicts the photogenic setting and the endless flow of traffic and should please viewers interested in modern operations on this busy ex-Santa Fe line. — *Tom Kelcec*

Alcos on the Cartier

Plets Express, P.O. Box 217, Altoona, WI 54720; 715/833-8889. 60 min.; $29.95 each plus $4.00 shipping in U.S., $5.00 shipping in Canada. Wisconsin residents add 5.5% tax.



In Quebec, a land discovered in 1535 by the French explorer Jacques Cartier, runs a railroad bearing his name that was completed in 1960. Running through a huge nature preserve replete with rivers, waterfalls, lakes and mountains, this line brings iron ore from the mine at the far northern end of the railroad at Ferrmont downhill to an ore pelletizing plant on the St. Lawrence River at Port Cartier. The video jacket bills the Quebec Cartier Mining Company as the last stronghold of big Alco diesel power in North America, but most of them are scheduled to be replaced with new General Electric power soon. Until that happens, Cartier's roster includes 31 Alco-design units of models RS18, C636 and M636. Most of the big six-axle units shown in the tape are in the old orange and dark green (black) paint scheme, but a couple are shown in the modern red, blue and silver scheme into which the survivors will be repainted. I find the new livery much less attractive than the old.

Video coverage consists of runbys shot at various points along the line, ranging from the very scenic locations to average trackside views. Much of the traffic is unit ore trains, as you might suspect, but we do see loaded and empty timber and general merchandise trains, a three-car company passenger train which runs once a week, and another passenger train hauling campers out of the woods. The ore cars are newer and lower than those of the DM&IR and look more like ballast cars. The railroad even boasts a "comboose", a combine that serves as what it sounds like, and some modern steel cabooses.

The constant diet of ore trains on screen can be a little tedious, but the heavily forested scenery along the MacDonald River often makes up for it with unending curves, cuts, waterfalls, mountains, bridges, rivers, a tunnel and lakes. Narration is generally limited to the essentials of place and milepost, locomotive consist, train type and direction. The program is visually well-executed with stereo sound. Most of the runbys, made in June 2000, were shot in full sunlight. This remote railroad's solid sets of well-maintained Alco-design power running through great scenery won't last forever, and the railroad is likely to remain unvisited by most of us due to its remoteness. If you have any interest in hard-working, big Alco loco-motives (which, of course, sound wonderful) or this type of heavy haul operation, this tape is a good bet. As always, the jacket includes a roster, map, and some nice still photos. — *Tom Kelcec*

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Railnews

This month's top stories and photos

Amtrak

***VERMONTER* SERVICE SUSPENDED:** An Amtrak track geometry car was operated on the *Vermonter* in late May which discovered numerous track defects on the New England Central between Palmer, Massachusetts and St. Albans, Vermont. The resulting speed restrictions would have added approximately 2½ hours to the train's run, so Amtrak discontinued the train north of Springfield, Massachusetts for more than three weeks in June. The substitute bus service was canceled on June 11th and 20 operating employees were furloughed, fueling speculation that Amtrak would take the opportunity to permanently discontinue the train due to operating losses. After another inspection by Amtrak and NECR using the track geometry car on June 21st, the train was reinstated on June 24th.

FEC TEST TRAIN OPERATED: Amtrak and Florida East Coast operated a well-received demonstration passenger train over its proposed new route between Jacksonville and Miami, Florida, on June 18th and 19th. The train consisted of FEC GP40-2 No.442 leading an Amtrak P42-9DC and six passenger cars including a Viewliner and Amtrak's office car *Beech Grove*. Service could begin as early as 2003 once funds for improvements are available.

CREATIVE FUND RAISING: Amtrak has received permission to obtain a $300 million loan to cover operating expenses through the end of the 2001 fiscal year in October, using Penn Station in New York as collateral. The railroad claims the shortfall is due in part to late deliveries of new Acela train sets. Meanwhile, the House Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee recommended full funding of $521 million in federal operating subsidies for fiscal year 2002, the lowest level of federal assistance in the company's history.

CSX

ICE COLD EXPRESS: CSX is handling the Chicago to New Jersey leg of Burlington Northern & Santa Fe's *Ice Cold Express* refrigerated RoadRailer trains twice weekly in each direction, on a schedule that's a full day faster than any other transcontinental intermodal service. Eastbound CSX Q162 leaves Chicago at 4:45 p.m. on Monday and Saturday, arriving Little Ferry, New Jersey at 10:00 p.m. on Tuesday and Sunday. Q163 leaves Little Ferry at 9:00 a.m. on Monday and Thursday, arriving Chicago at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday and Friday. Canadian National handles *ICE* traffic to Toronto and Montreal.

SERVICE MILESTONE: As a testament to a successful recovery from the service problems which plagued its integration of Conrail lines, CSX Transportation moved more than 16,000 United Parcel Service loads in May without a single late delivery. The previous record was in August 1997, before the Conrail acquisition, when only one UPS load was delivered late.

Canadian National

MULTI-LEVELS REROUTED: Canadian National has recently moved new automobile traffic from Michigan to western Canada to a more direct route via Chicago and the Wisconsin Central and Duluth, Winnipeg & Pacific in an effort to reduce mileage, increase fuel savings and save time. As a result, CN business on Wisconsin Central has nearly doubled. This traffic had previously been routed to Toronto for classification and then sent west.

Genesee & Wyoming

NEW SALT MINE OPENS: In 1994 Genesee & Wyoming's largest customer, the Akzo Nobel salt mine at Retsof, New York, suffered a catastrophic collapse and flooding, forcing its closure. GNWR continued to ship salt from Akzo's huge above ground stockpile until September 1995. American Rock Salt Company has opened a new mine at Hampton Corners, New York, about six miles south of Retsof, reached by a new spur across the valley from GNWR's line to Mount Morris. The first loaded salt train operated the night of May 29, 2001. GNWR takes the loads north to an interchange with the Rochester & Southern at P&L (Pittsburgh & Lehigh) Junction. R&S interchanges with CSX at Rochester and with NS and Canadian Pacific at Silver Spring. Trains from the mine to P&L Junction are powered by SW1001s 1000 and 1001 and use an ex-B&O caboose. GNWR expects to move 1250 loads a month by this fall (see **page 27**). — *PETE SWANSON*

Lackawanna Cutoff

FINALLY, NEW JERSEY BUYS IT: The New Jersey Department of Transportation has purchased the former Lackawanna Cutoff right of way across northwestern New Jersey, plus the Slateford Bridge across the Delaware River, from developer Jerry Turco for $21 million. The Monroe County (Pennsylvania) Railroad Authority is negotiating with Norfolk Southern for the purchase of ten miles of track from Slateford Junction to Analomink, which would connect the Cutoff in New Jersey with Monroe County's line from Analomink to Scranton. Federal funds totalling $184 million have been appropriated for rebuilding the Cutoff and establishing passenger service from Scranton to Hoboken and New York.

Livonia, Avon & Lakeville

BIG CENTURIES REUNITED: Four ex-New York Central Alco Century 430s will run again under the Livonia, Avon & Lakeville banner. NYS&W 3000 and 3006 (NYC 2050 and 2056) arrived in Lakeville, New York on June 14th, while Morristown & Erie 17 (NYC 2053) was on the property a few days later. M&E 16 followed by the end of June. After painting and mechanical work, the units will be assigned to LA&L's Western New York & Pennsylvania out of Falconer, New York. — *PETE SWANSON*

Long Island Rail Road

SUPER STEEL UNITS RECALLED: All Long Island Rail Road DE30AC and DM30AC diesels will be returned to the builder for replacement of engine mounting brackets, or skids, which have developed vibration-induced cracks. The units will be sent back two at a time beginning in September, and the railroad will lease two Amtrak F40PH's to fill in.

Norfolk Southern

2-6-6-4 DONATED TO MUSEUM: Norfolk Southern will donate Norfolk & Western Class A 2-6-6-4 No.1218 to the City of Roanoke, Virginia, for display at the Virginia Museum of Transportation. The locomotive's donation is contingent upon the Center in the Square Museum obtaining exclusive rights to house the O. Winston Link Museum at the former N&W passenger station in Roanoke. NS hopes the donation of No.1218 will ensure that the Link museum will be established.

Pioneer Railcorp

ELKHART & WESTERN: Pioneer Railcorp has spun off the Elkhart, Indiana, division of the Michigan Southern as the Elkhart & Western (EWR), running nine miles from the NS interchange at Elkhart west to Mishawaka, near South Bend. As a condition of the Conrail breakup, EWR has established an interchange with CSX at Fort Wayne through a haulage agreement.

ALABAMA & FLORIDA SOLD: Pioneer Railcorp's Alabama & Florida (AF) subsidiary has sold its track from Georgiana, Alabama, to Andalusia, Alabama, 33.9 miles, to the Three Notch Railroad (TNR), a subsidiary of Gulf & Ohio Railways. AF will retain the 42.8 miles from East Andalusia to Geneva, Alabama, interchanging with TNR at Andalusia. Pioneer will continue to operate its other Alabama short line, the Alabama Railroad (ALAB), which has recently rehabilitated two bridges and is conducting a major tie replacement and resurfacing project.

St. Johnsbury & Lamoille County

RAILROAD OR BIKE PATH? The Mountain Valley Corridor Consortium has recommended that the 96-mile former St. Johnsbury & Lamoille County railroad in northern Vermont, last operated as the Lamoille Valley, be torn up and converted to a recreational trail. Vermont Rail Link had proposed the restoration of rail service over part of the line, between St. Albans and Greensboro Bend. VRL had projected freight traffic of 3000 cars a year after five years, after which the railroad would be profitable. VRL had also planned to run excursions from Morrisville to Johnson six months a year, carrying a projected 22,000 riders. With little potential traffic, the segment from Greensboro Bend to St. Johnsbury was unlikely to be restored.

Genesee & Wyoming

With the opening of a new salt mine at Hampton Corners, New York, the original Genesee & Wyoming is back in business. Freshly painted SW1001s 1001 and 1000 (ex-CR 9424, 9405) pull a cut of shiny new Trinity covered hoppers out of the shiny new plant on May 30 (**above**). A fleet of 650 new Trinity-built cars is assigned to American Rock Salt service. GNWR mine jobs run to the Rochester & Southern interchange at P&L Junction, New York. See **page 26.**

TOM SAVIO

More Relics on the Move

On May 17 and 18, 2001, Union Pacific moved Big Boy No. 4023 and Centennial No. 6900 from their display site at Omaha's Kenefick Park to temporary storage at Omaha Union Station. The locomotives have been moved while an arena and convention center are being built adjacent to the park, where they will be displayed.

New *Whistler Northwind* Power

Wearing a quite dignified if not terribly visible paint scheme, *Whistler Northwind* B39-8E No.1700 is shown at Exeter, British Columbia, on the May 6, 2001, inaugural run of the luxury tour train (**left**). No.1700 is ex-LMX 8558, one of three acquired by BC Rail. LMX 8555 and 8574 became BCR 3904 and 3905.

Railnews

This month's top stories and photos

Stampede Daylight

With Mount Hood rising in the background, ex-Southern Pacific 4449 is running along the Columbia River at North Dalles, Washington on May 26th on the first leg (Portland to Yakima) of a two-day circle trip around Washington state (**right**). The next day the train returned to Portland over the Stampede Pass line.

STEVEN J. BROWN

NYNH&H Catenary Replaced

Connecticut Department of Transportation crews are replacing the remaining 1913-era New Haven Railroad triangular catenary between New Haven and the New York border. The new wire will allow higher speeds for Metro North and Amtrak trains. Wire and track work was well under way at Old Greenwich, Connecticut in early May (**below**).

JOE CALIS

Milwaukee 261 on BNSF

Milwaukee Road Northern No.261 made two trips out of Minneapolis on June 2 and 3, 2001. On Saturday, 261 ran to Willmar, Minnesota, over the former Great Northern main line, with two runbys. The Sunday trip to St. Cloud had no runbys, but featured fast running on the former Northern Pacific main. Both trips were short enough to allow the locomotive to run without its customary auxiliary water tender. The big 4-8-4 is in full stride at Montrose, Minnesota on Saturday.

ERIC S. HILLY

RAY LEWIS

New Union Pacific Power

Union Pacific has received all 70 General Electric AC4400CTE diesels and is using them in general freight service. The units will serve as distributed power helpers after testing in that service is complete. UP 5760, 5752 and 5725 are leading train GSANTR-25 westbound through Keddie, California on May 30, 2001.

DOUG KROLL

Buffalo Southern: New Power, Mixed Fortunes

Con Agra shuttered its last flour mill in Buffalo, New York, at the end of June, resulting in the closing of Buffalo Southern's former Pennsy Burrows Lot yard and no more work for the four Alcos that switched it (**below**). General Mills and Archer Daniels Midland still mill grain in Buffalo at several plants served by CSX. At the end of April, BSOR received ex-Rock Island C415 No.423 from Rail Car America. The rare unit is currently stored out of service at the railroad's shop at Hamburg, New York (**right**).

STEPHAN M. KOENIG

Burlington Northern & Santa Fe

In the Heart of Dixie

by Ronald G. Mele and David Hurt

THINK OF the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railway and you might envision a 10,000-ton coal train rolling across the high plains of Nebraska. Or you may imagine a fast double-stack intermodal train streaking through the desert lands of New Mexico and Arizona. But in northern Mississippi and northwest Alabama, BNSF operates in surroundings far removed from its "traditional" geographic environments. This is the land of rolling hills and red clay, loblolly pines and kudzu. In many respects, BNSF's operations in Mississippi and Alabama represent a microcosm of the railroad's greater image.

Welcome to the Birmingham Subdivision of the BNSF Memphis Division, a 234-mile CTC-controlled railroad running between Tennessee Yard in Memphis and East Thomas Yard in Birmingham, Alabama. This former St. Louis-San Francisco Railway main line provides BNSF with a vital link between western and southeastern markets and represents one of the longest point-to-point hauls in the United States. A secondary line, the Amory Subdivision, branches off from the Birmingham Subdivision at Amory, Mississippi, and runs to Kimbrough, Alabama, where BNSF has trackage rights over Norfolk Southern to the Alabama port city of Mobile. Traffic on the Amory Subdivision mostly consists of pulp and paper products and chemicals. This article focuses primarily on BNSF's Birmingham Subdivision in Alabama.

ABOVE: **In May 1999, a contract crew is at the controls of BNSF SD70MAC No.9958 as it leads an empty coal train out of Alabama Power's Miller Steam Plant to the Quinton holding yard , where a fresh BNSF crew will take the train north.** OPPOSITE TOP: **The Birmingham Hub at East Thomas Yard is well marked.** OPPOSITE MIDDLE: **Santa Fe trackage rights over BN's Birmingham Subdivision brought warbonnets to Dixie even before the BNSF merger. Santa Fe SDFP45 No.98 leads a northbound freight through Winfield, Alabama, in September 1995.** OPPOSITE BOTTOM: **Santa Fe SD45-2 No.5801 and SDF40-2 No.5251 lead a northbound intermodal train through Tupelo, Mississippi, in April 1995. BNSF predecessors Santa Fe and Frisco provided closely coordinated service between California and the Southeast over this route for years before the merger.**

A Look Back

The history of the Birmingham Subdivision dates back to the late 1800s when the Kansas City, Memphis & Birmingham Railroad built toward Birmingham, arriving in 1887. In 1901, the St. Louis-San Francisco (Frisco) acquired the KCM&B and forged an important rail route between the midwest and southeast through connections with the Seaboard Air Line, Southern Railway and the Central of Georgia. Frisco's main interchange partner in Birmingham, the Central of Georgia, also used terminal facilities at Frisco's East Thomas Yard. The Illinois Central acquired trackage rights over the KCM&B from Jasper, Alabama, into Birmingham in 1899. (From Jasper to Haleyville, Alabama, IC had rights over the Southern). Those rights were held until 1987, when Illinois Central Gulf sold or abandoned all routes not part of its basic north-south system.

The Birmingham Subdivision saw its share of varnish during the heyday of passenger trains. Most notable were the *Kansas City-Florida Special,* the *Sunnyland,* the *Seminole* and the *City of Miami.* All were run in conjunction with connecting railroads. Frisco passenger trains through Birmingham used the Birmingham Terminal Station, a facility jointly operated with the Southern, Central of Georgia, Illinois Central and the Seaboard Air Line. Amtrak ended Birmingham Subdivision passenger service in 1971.

In 1980, Burlington Northern acquired the Frisco, making Birmingham the eastern terminus of the only railroad with single-line service between the Pacific Northwest and the Southeast. Around 1992, Burlington Northern entered into an agreement with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway, giving Santa Fe operating rights into Birmingham via a connection in Avard, Oklahoma. Santa Fe, a well-known innovator in the intermodal market, initiated through piggyback service between Birmingham and Los Angeles. Burlington Northern and Santa Fe merged in 1995 to become the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railway.

The Birmingham Hub

BNSF's Southeastern intermodal focal point, the Birmingham Hub (formerly known as the Dixie Hub), was established in 1985 on the northern portion of East Thomas Yard on the site of Illinois Central's engine facility and yard. Prior to the Hub, BN's

piggyback terminal was located on the south side of East Thomas Yard, a site plagued by limited space and access problems. Hub facilities consist of two long strip tracks (one 3400 feet and the other 5200 feet), separated by a concrete roadway, with space to park 578 trailers. Two overhead gantry-type loaders straddle the strip track and roadway and efficiently load and unload containers. A side loader is used to pick up and deliver boxes to and from storage areas elsewhere in the yard.

The types of intermodal equipment handled at the Birmingham Hub demonstrate the changing nature of the railroad industry. Traffic growth, truck competition, and profit considerations have forced railroads to adopt more efficient means of transporting intermodal traffic. "At one time, two 40-foot trailers on an 89-foot piggyback flat was the rule. Today, that is the exception," says Larry White, manager of the Birmingham Hub. Indeed, according to White, the traditional 89-foot flat car is becoming a rarity, as most intermodal traffic through the Birmingham Hub comes in containers, not trailers. Double stacked containers loaded on five-unit articulated deep-well container cars now predominate.

The growth pattern for intermodal traffic at the Birmingham Hub can be best described as a roller coaster. Until May 2000, the Birmingham Hub was part of BNSF's "Intermodal Extension" or "IMX". "We went into the heart of CSX and Norfolk Southern territory by soliciting trailer and container traffic through satellite hub centers in Charlotte, North Carolina; Greenville, South Carolina and Atlanta, Georgia," says Larry White. "The traffic was hauled over the road to Birmingham and then by rail to the West Coast. Some traffic came from local industries, but most came from the satellite centers." That pattern changed dramatically when BNSF announced an agreement with Norfolk Southern and Kansas City Southern to provide an all-rail route between the Southeast and West Coast via Meridian, Mississippi, and Dallas, Texas. The new service, which began on May 21, 2000, effectively ended the IMX operation through the Birmingham Hub.

Prior to the new arrangement with NS and KCS, BNSF did about 320 lifts per day at the Birmingham Hub. (One trailer or container placed on or taken off an intermodal platform constitutes a lift.) Today the yard averages only about 100 lifts a day. The number of intermodal trains in and out of East Thomas Yard also reflects the reduction in lifts. "We're down to one train a day each way, six days a week. That compares with two or three inbound and two outbound trains everyday just a few years ago," says Larry White. The westbound train, P-BIRSPM (Birmingham-Springfield, Missouri) leaves Birmingham at 12:30 in the morning. At Springfield the train is divided and cuts are placed on trains headed to Seattle or Southern California. The eastbound counterpart arrives in Birmingham on an irregular schedule.

The loss of IMX traffic has been partly offset by a new source of traffic for the Birmingham Hub, an automobile unloading ramp opened in December, 2000 adjacent to the existing facility. This is the first time BNSF has located a ramp within a hub center. Birmingham is now the distribution point for Honda automobiles that are transported on a long eastward transcontinental journey from San Diego and from Honda's Alliston, Ontario, assembly plant via interchange with Canadian Pacific in Chicago. Arriving at the Birmingham Hub, the automobiles are unloaded

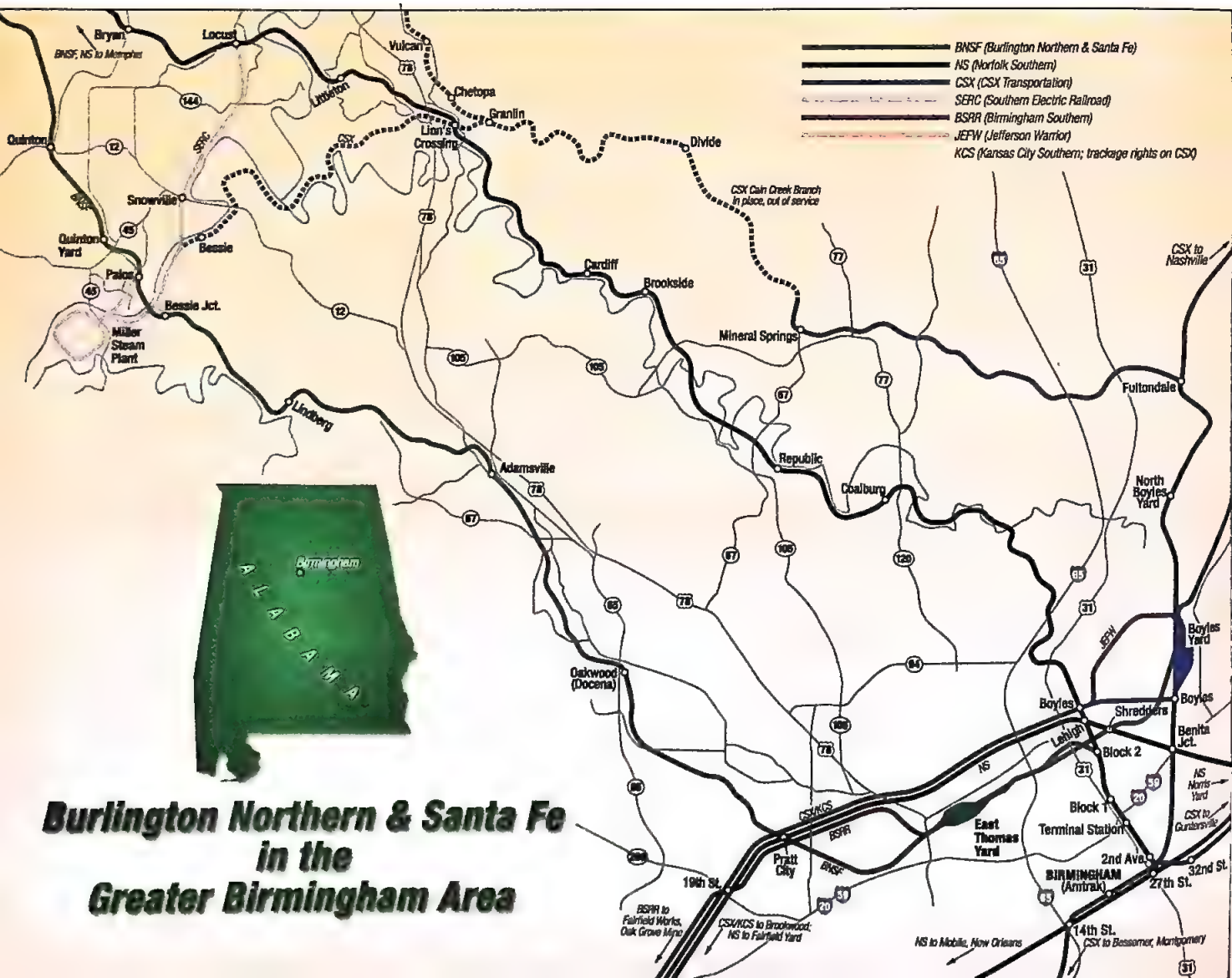
ABOVE AND OPPOSITE: RON MELE

PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVID HURT, EXCEPT AS NOTED

and stored in a secure lot. From there, they are distributed to Southeastern destinations via highway. "This market holds the potential for a lot of future growth," says Larry White. A large Honda assembly plant being built in nearby Lincoln, Alabama, might also provide BNSF with additional intermodal and/or general freight traffic. Another bright spot on the horizon — BNSF is negotiating with another automobile manufacturer to use the Birmingham Hub for their Southeastern distribution point.

East Thomas Yard

In addition to intermodal traffic, the Birmingham Subdivision sees significant conventional freight traffic. East Thomas Yard, located on the northwest side of Birmingham, is a flat switching facility that classifies between 600 and 700 cars per day. "Most cars come to us through interchange with CSX and Norfolk Southern," says Mike White, Terminal Manager at East Thomas Yard. "But we also do a fair amount of business with the Birmingham Southern Railroad and Jefferson Warrior Railroad." (Jefferson Warrior is a local switching line operated by Sloss Industries of Birmingham.) Mike



Burlington Northern & Santa Fe in the Greater Birmingham Area

OPPOSITE TOP: **A pair of SD70MAC DPU's are pushing a southbound coal train at Amory, Mississippi, in April 1998. Helpers are needed to get loaded coal trains over the 1.25% ruling grade at Eldridge, Alabama.** ABOVE: **Burlington Northern SD40-2 No.6832 rounds a tight curve with southbound train No.128 at Carbon Hill, Alabama, on December 16, 1995. When BN merged with the Frisco, it gave the big Western railroad access across the South all the way to the Gulf of Mexico at Pensacola, Florida.** BELOW: **BNSF's classy F9s (Nos.1 and 2) lead ten Norfolk Southern business cars bound for Atlanta at Carbon Hill, Alabama, on June 20, 1991.**

White oversees a 'round the clock operation employing 200 people in a variety of transportation and support positions.

Each day, BNSF dispatches two manifest freights over the Birmingham Subdivision. The westbound train is M-BIRMEM to Memphis and its eastbound counterpart is M-MEMCSX. Extra trains are common, depending on the level of traffic. A long distance local, L-MEM6311, runs six days a week to serve customers between Birmingham and Amory, Mississippi.

In addition, BNSF and local steel hauler Birmingham Southern operate a unit steel coil train from Birmingham to Pittsburg, California. The coils are produced at U.S. Steel's Fairfield Works and transferred by the BSRR to East Thomas Yard. From there, BNSF forwards the coils to USS-Posco's Pittsburg, California, Works for processing and fabrication. The coil train is symboled U-BIRPIT and runs one or two days a week.

Keeping East Thomas fluid is the responsibility of ten daily yard jobs. Interchange traffic, which makes up most of BNSF's non-intermodal business at East Thomas, is handled by three crews. Another crew is assigned to the Birmingham Hub, and three crews are assigned to switch local industrial customers. BNSF's largest customer in Birmingham, the American Cast Iron Pipe Company, is reached via a short stretch of trackage rights over the Birmingham Southern. Finally, one crew per shift classifies and inbound and outbound trains.

According to Terminal Manager White, East Thomas Yard has seen a dramatic increase in traffic since the beginning of 2001, when U.S. Steel awarded BNSF a three-year contract to transport taconite from Saunders, Wisconsin, to Birmingham through an interchange with the Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range (train symbol U-SAUBIR). The contract means the yard now handles 2500 more cars per month, with the potential for even more. In addition, BNSF has joined with Birmingham Southern and Elgin, Joliet & Eastern to haul metallurgical coal to U.S. Steel's Gary, Indiana, Works. The train, which runs about three times a month, carries coal mined at U.S. Steel's Oak Grove Mine. BNSF receives the coal from the BSRR, hauls it to Chicago and hands it off to the EJ&E for final delivery.

GERALD SIRES

ABOVE: **A northbound freight led by BN GP50 No.3145, a cabless GE B30-7A and a Conrail SD40-2 crosses the Tombigbee River bridge at Amory, Mississippi, on April 12, 1995.** BELOW: **The Birmingham Sub is known for hosting a wide variety of motive power. At East Thomas Yard, a consist including a Santa Fe GP40X, BN B30-7A, ATSF SDF40-2 and LMX Dash 8-39B threads its way through the yard on Thanksgiving Day 1997.**

The Coal Connection

During the 1970s, when the United States was in the midst of an energy crisis, BNSF predecessor Burlington Northern was busy laying track in eastern Wyoming's Powder River Basin to tap billions of tons of coal reserves. With most of the world's oil supply in less-than-friendly hands and Appalachian coal becoming more expensive to mine while coming under increased environmental scrutiny, Powder River coal held the promise of providing the United States with a secure energy reserve well into the 21st Century. Over time, many Midwestern power plants were attracted to the low cost and very low sulfur content of coal from the Powder River Basin. As the plants converted their boilers to burn PRB coal, Burlington Northern began to attract a significant number of new utility customers. In October of 1994, Alabama Power Company's Miller Steam Plant became the first Alabama power plant (and one of the first in the Southeast) to use PRB coal delivered by Burlington Northern.

The James H. Miller Generating Station of Alabama Power Company is located in West Jefferson, Alabama, a small community about 15 miles northwest of Birmingham. It has four generating units with 2640 megawatts of generating capacity, making it the largest of the 22 power plants operated by Alabama Power. Until 1994, Plant Miller burned Appalachian coal delivered by CSX over the Cain Creek Branch. Although BN's Birmingham Subdivision ran close to Miller, there was no direct physical connection to the plant. During the early 1990s, Southern Electric Railroad Company, a subsidiary of The Southern Company, built a short branch to connect Plant Miller with Burlington Northern at a station called Palos. According to Roy Harrell, Vice President of Southern Electric Railroad Company, the decision to pursue PRB coal as a fuel source for Plant Miller was mostly based on cost considerations, with EPA compliance as a significant benefit.

Alabama Power had one generating unit ready to burn PRB coal by late 1994, with a second unit added in 1997. During the summer of 1999, all four Plant Miller generating units were burning PRB coal. BNSF's contract with Alabama Power extends through 2005 and commits them to the annual delivery of over twelve million tons of coal to Plant Miller. The coal primarily comes from three sources in Wyoming — Kennecott's Jacobs Ranch Mine, Cyprus Amax's Belle Ayr Mine and Powder River Coal Company's North Antelope Mine. Trains are symboled according to the originaing mine. For example, loaded coal trains are C-JRMPAM, C-BAMPAM and C-NAMPAM. Empty trains have an 'E' prefix and reversed symbols.

There are 20 135-car train sets used in the cycle between Wyoming and Alabama, with three to four trains arriving every day at Plant Miller. With such a large commitment of equipment and resources to one customer, it should come as no surprise that Plant Miller is the second largest coal user on the entire BNSF system. The railroad normally assigns between four and five SD70MAC's to

RON MELE

each train — two or three up front and two radio-controlled DPU units on the rear to overcome a 1.25% grade at Eldridge, Alabama. Inbound trains stop at the new holding yard at Quinton, just northwest of Palos. There, a contract crew takes the train to a coal unloading trestle on the loop track around the power plant. The hoppers are unloaded with an electro-pneumatic system that opens the doors using air pressure supplied by the locomotive. As the train proceeds through the unloading area, electrical contacts on the side of each car come in contact with "hot rails" mounted on the trestle. When the rails are energized, the doors open. After the car is emptied, the polarity is reversed and the doors close. The unloading cycle takes between two and three hours. After a train is unloaded, it runs around the loop back to the holding yard, gets a new crew and supplies, and heads west to begin the cycle again.

Before the Quinton holding yard was built, the railroad had to give Plant Miller 14 hours advance notice before a train arrived. The new yard allows BNSF to store a train temporarily until the plant is ready for the next load of coal. Although BNSF's status as sole provider of coal to Plant Miller is secure for now, that may change. In 1999, the Southern Electric Railroad completed a link between Plant Miller and Norfolk Southern's Birmingham-Sheffield 'NA' Line, giving NS an opportunity to compete with BNSF for

ABOVE: **Two years after Frisco was absorbed by Burlington Northern it was still possible to find power wearing the fallen flag's colors. GP38-2 No.2270 was in Amory, Mississippi, on October 1, 1982.**
BELOW: **BN GP50 No.3116 leads a southbound freight past the former Frisco depot at Jasper, Alabama, on June 17, 1995. The station at one time was constructed entirely of stone and brick, but a derailment took out the near end of the structure which was replaced with wood. Norfolk Southern crosses BNSF at grade just north of the station.**

GERALD SIRES

the coal contract when it expires in 2005. Presumably, NS will team up with Union Pacific to compete against BNSF for the contract. Without a friendly western coal connection, CSX is currently out of the picture as a coal provider to Plant Miller.

Beyond Birmingham

Heading west on the Birmingham Subdivision, the next hot spot is Amory, Mississippi. Back in Frisco days, Amory was the point where trains between Birmingham and Memphis changed crews, a practice that ended when Burlington Northern took over. Amory has a small yard and continues to be a crew change point for trains operating on the Amory Subdivision. The Amory Sub, formerly known as the "R" Line, extended through to Pensacola, Florida, until 1997 when BNSF sold the right of way south of Kimbrough, Alabama, to the Alabama & Gulf Coast. BNSF maintains access to the Gulf of Mexico via trackage rights over Norfolk Southern between Kimbrough and Mobile. Conversely, Norfolk Southern gained trackage rights over the Amory Subdivision between Boligee, Alabama, and Columbus, Mississippi, allowing NS to abandon part of their own line to Columbus between Berry and Belk, Alabama.

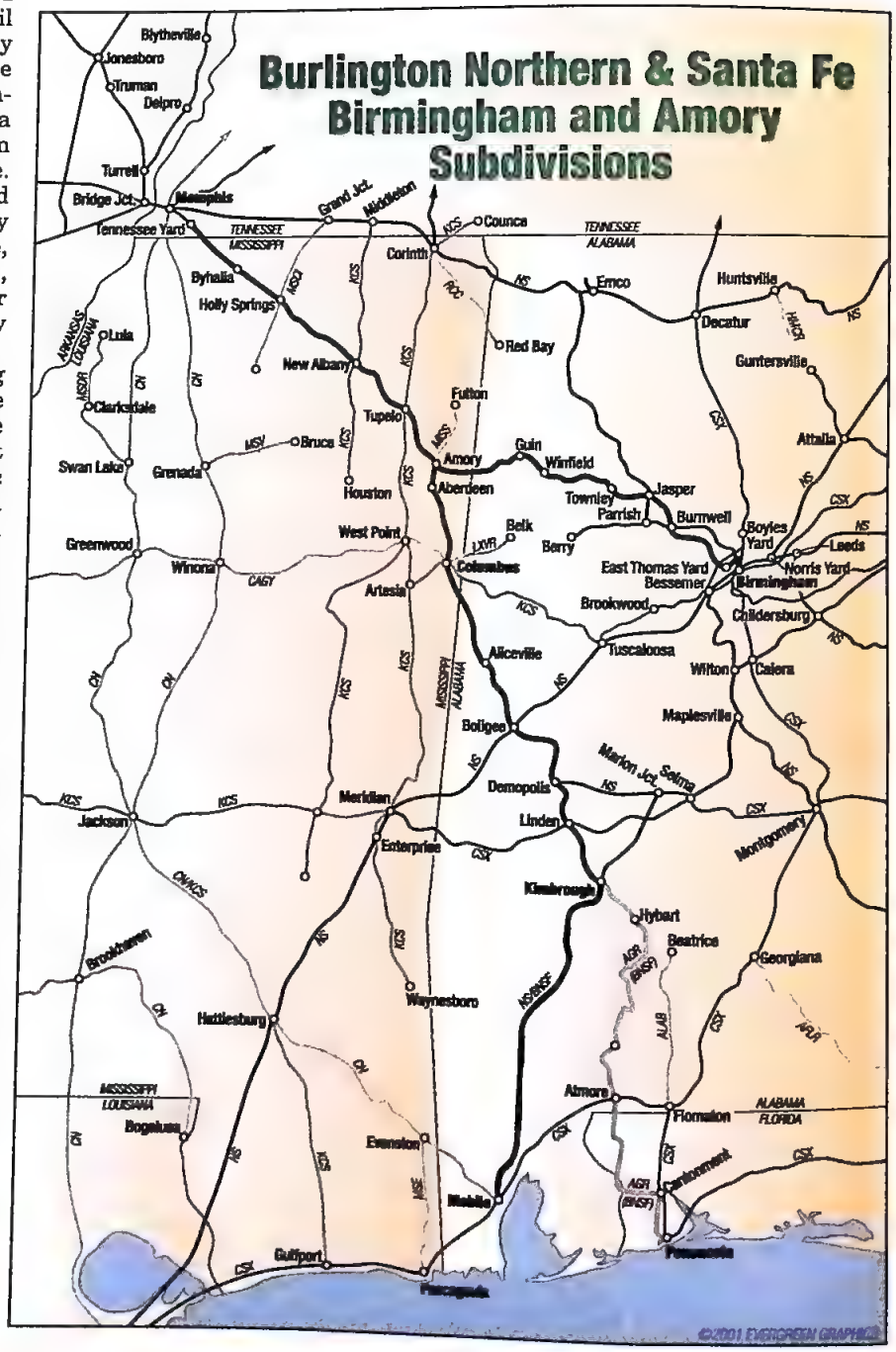
One of BNSF's more interesting operations through Amory is the seasonal surge of grain traffic from the midwest. While most goes to the Port of Mobile for export, some grain traffic terminates at elevators or chicken feed processing plants in Alabama and Mississippi. Amory is a grain terminal, with cars delivered to Jasper, Alabama on the Birmingham-Amory local. Cars are also set out in Tupelo, Mississippi, for delivery to the KCS. These cars are delivered to Gordo, Alabama, on KCS's former Mid-South (ex-GM&O) line to Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

BNSF maintains connections with a host of Class III lines in Mississippi on the Birmingham and Amory Subdivisions. In Columbus, Mississippi, are the Columbus & Greenville, Luxapalila Valley and Golden Triangle. BNSF interchanges with the Mississippian Railway at Amory, Mississippi & Tennessee Railnet at New Albany and Mississippi Central at Holly Springs. Most interchange traffic consists of chemicals, wood pulp and finished paper products. Also, steam fans should take note that Frisco Mountain No.1529 sits on static display at the park in Amory.

Railfanning The BNSF

There are several good locations where BNSF action can be observed from a safe vantage point. The best place to shoot photos of East Thomas Yard is from the sidewalk on the Arkadelphia Road bridge over the west end of the yard. To get there, take the Arkadelphia Road exit (U.S. 78 West) off Interstate 20/59 and go less than a half mile to the bridge. You can park on a side street just before the bridge. Since East Thomas Yard is situated east-west, the best time to photograph it is early afternoon to sundown. To reach the Miller Steam Plant, go west on Highway 78 to Graysville. Take the exit for Flat Top and West Jefferson (County Highway 12). Turn left and proceed toward the town of West Jefferson. As you approach the power plant, Flat Top Road crosses the Birmingham Subdivision above grade. The bridge and shoulders of the road provide an excellent overhead vantage point for good photos of main line action or coal train movements between the yard at Quinton and the power plant. Continue on Flat Top Road to Porter Road and turn left. Porter Road bridges the spur to the power plant near the main entrance. Overhead photos can be taken from the bridge anytime during the day. The power plant, with its massive cooling towers, presents a dramatic backdrop for a train circling the loop track.

Additional photo locations in Alabama include Cordova, Jasper, Townley, Carbon Hill, Eldridge and Winfield. In Mississippi, good photos include Wise's Gap, the east end of the siding at Judge, the Tenn-Tom River bridge just north of Amory, Belden and New Albany. Following the Birming-



ham Subdivision between Memphis and Birmingham is relatively easy since BNSF runs near U.S. Highway 78. A major exception is from Guin, Alabama, to Tupelo, Mississippi, where BNSF roughly parallels U.S. 278. Consult Alabama and Mississippi highway maps for more information.

Food and gas are available about anywhere along U.S. 78. Overnight lodging can be found around Birmingham and Amory. Avoid trespassing on Alabama Power or BNSF property. Visitors should also remember that weather conditions in the Deep South, while generally good, can be unbearable and uninviting (hot, hazy and humid) during the summer. However, spring and fall are usually pleasant and present near-ideal conditions for photography. Enjoy your visit to the Heart of Dixie as you experience a taste of Burlington Northern & Santa Fe, "Southern Style."

The authors thank David Rickey and Roy Harrell of Alabama Power and Jerry Jenkins, Mike White and Larry White of Burlington Northern & Santa Fe for their help in preparing this article. David Hurt would especially like to thank Trainmaster Donnie Riddle and the many current and former railroaders from Amory for their help over the years and dedicates this article to them.

ABOVE: **What was once the brakeman's view from the cab of a trailing unit shows BN GP39E No.2901 meeting a train led by a MidSouth unit on the Amory Subdivision near Columbus, Mississippi.** BELOW: **Although this may be former BN trackage, but Santa Fe power dominates this scene. ATSF GP35 No. 2822 leads three other units on a good-sized Birmingham-Amory local freight through Carbon Hill, Alabama on February 3, 1999.**

Discover California

Legend

Purple: April trip
Red: June trip

- *Starlight not ridden*
- *Bus, light rail or ferry*
- *Amtrak Regional*
- *Commuter Rail Agency*

ACE: Altamont Commuter Express
BUS: Connecting bus
FY: Ferry
VTA: Santa Clara Valley Trans. Auth.

Why would anyone ... Starlight ... for more ...

THE *COAST STARLIGHT* runs most of the length of California, from the Oregon state line at Dorris to Los Angeles, where there are good connections to San Diego — and a light rail line can take you from San Diego to the Mexican border at San Ysidro. The *Coast Starlight* is Amtrak's best train. Why would anyone forsake its dining car, first class lounge, attentive and friendly staff, and scenery to ride other, more mundane trains down through California? To echo George Mallory, because they are there.

California has three short-distance Amtrak services: The *Pacific Surfliners* (they were known as the *San Diegans* until summer 2000), which run from San Diego through Los Angeles to Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo; the *San Joaquins,* connecting Oakland and Sacramento with Bakersfield; and the *Capitols*, which run from San Jose through Oakland to Sacramento and Roseville. Connecting with these trains is a network of state-sponsored buses, from McKinleyville and Redding in the north to Indio in the southeast, and across the Nevada state line to Sparks and Las Vegas.

The *San Joaquins* and *Capitols* share track between Oakland and Martinez, and their routes also meet at Sacramento, but they don't cross the path of the *Pacific Surfliners.* The gaps are between Bakersfield and Burbank, 159 miles, and between San Jose and San Luis Obispo, 201 miles.

Buses reach across those gaps — Bakersfield to Los Angeles and San Jose to San Luis Obispo (also Hanford to San Luis Obispo) — but better for the purposes of the train-riding railfan are the commuter trains that reach part way across those gaps. Caltrain service extends 30 miles south of San Jose to Gilroy, and Metrolink runs north 77 miles from Los Angeles to Lancaster. The San Jose-San Luis Obispo bus doesn't mesh well with Caltrain at Gilroy, but one *San Joaquin* each way has a bus connection to Lancaster. Bingo!

I could ride a *San Joaquin* from Oakland down the San Joaquin Valley to Bakersfield (although technically it's *up* the valley), the connecting bus to Lancaster, Metrolink to Los Angeles, Amtrak or Metrolink to Oceanside, and the *Coaster* to San Diego. I'd have to spend a night in Lancaster and several hours each in Los Angeles and Oceanside, but it would be daylight travel and there would be only one bus ride.

Had my trip not been bookended by commitments at home, I'd have included a Sacramento-San Jose *Capitol,* the Caltrain commute service between San Francisco and San Jose, and the Altamont Commuter Express from San Jose to Stockton in my itinerary. I'd get to them later.

I had planned to enter California on the southbound *Coast Starlight*. I chose Martinez as a transfer point, arriving at 7:37 a.m for an easy, secure, even leisurely connection to the third *San Joaquin* of the day at 10:54, the one with the bus connection to Lancaster. Indeed, if the *Starlight* were on time that morning, I could make an on-the-spot decision to continue to Emeryville or Oakland and pick up the *San Joaquin* there.

Sunday, April 2, 2000

I awake about 5:00 a.m. as the *Starlight* stops. Were the train on time, it would be almost to Sacramento. Nearby I can see a neon sign for the Shasta Lake Motel. This is not Sacramento. The

ABOVE: **It's bus time in Bakersfield. Passengers from *San Joaquin* trains transfer to buses at the Amtrak station on April 2, 2000.**

OPPOSITE: **Amtrak train No.581, with F59PHI No. 454 leading a combination of Horizon and Amfleet cars, brakes for its stop in Oceanside, California, on April 3, 2000. At the time of the author's trip No.581 and its coast line sisters were known as *San Diegans,* but they have since been renamed *Pacific Surfliners.***

LEFT: **The next day, Union Pacific SD40-2 No.3156 leads a very late *Coast Starlight* from Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal to the coach yard. The author had left this very train in Sacramento the day before,taking two trains and bus down the San Joaquin Valley into L.A. and staying overnight in Lancaster. As his Metrolink train from Lancaster waited to get into LAUPT, Drury grabbed this shot of "his" *Starlight*.**

Starlight moves forward, backs into a siding for a northbound piggyback train and meets its northbound counterpart, warm on the heels of the freight.

The train was 34 minutes late into Portland yesterday afternoon. It lost most of an hour there because of drawbridge problems, and got later through the afternoon and evening. Quick work by the service crew at Klamath Falls cut the delay from two hours to one hour and 28 minutes, but an hour was added as the clock moved ahead to Daylight Savings Time.

Chico: 3:42 late. *If* there's really 45 minutes of slack in the schedule, as I estimate, and *if* the service crew at Sacramento hustles so the station stop takes no more than the 25 to 30 minutes the northbound *Starlight* is allotted there, and *if* the train loses no more time west of Sacramento, I'll make the connection at Martinez.

That's too many ifs. Even before the conductor suggests it, I decide to get off at Sacramento and take the *San Joaquin's* connecting bus to Stockton, due out of Sacramento at 10:45.

The *Starlight* arrives Sacramento about 10:00. You know those movie scenes of the marketplace

RIGHT: **Metrolink train No.207 is approaching the tunnels at Lang, California, on the former Southern Pacific line between Lancaster and Burbank on January 18, 2000.**

CENTER: **Well, duh. Is this signal really necessary? Does it have yellow and green aspects? A quite redundant block signal sits at the end of Metrolink's track in Lancaster, California.**

BELOW: **A pair of Metrolink commuter trains wait out the weekend at Lancaster on April 2, 2000. Come Monday morning, they will be back at work taking commuters into Los Angeles.**

in Cairo, Baghdad, or Calcutta? That's the bus loading area, without the camels. Most travelers have all they can handle with a simple trip from point A to point B. Simply add a change in arrangements, carts full of baggage and express, and announcements that are hard to hear (no one is paying attention anyway, or they're asking each other if the announcement is about their bus), and travelers fall apart. The promise of more buses doesn't allay any fears.

Stockton is easy. *San Joaquin* No. 714 arrives on time, the doors open. I board and find a seat. I look out at the station platform and there's major confusion. A connecting bus is late, and there's a mountain of baggage and express to load on the train. At 12:03 the train backs up one car length; at 12:05, the automatic train announce-ment says, "Arriving Stockton." Burlington Northern & Santa Fe's track down the San Joaquin Valley causes lots of jounce, sway and corkscrew motion, plus the occasional lateral WHUMP! My seat is at the end of the car, and it's missing an armrest. I don't have much to hang on to.

The food service car has a nice dining area and a takeout counter. I'd choose table service if the air conditioning were functioning, but it's not. I settle for a sandwich to carry back to my coach seat. The guy ahead of me at the counter is one of those you get behind at the supermarket deli counter. "Um, I'd like a quarter pound of the sliced ham." Slice, slice, slice, weigh, wrap. "Anything else?" "Yeah, a quarter pound of, um, oh, the sliced turkey." Slice, slice, slice, weigh, wrap. "Anything else." "Oh, I don't know, maybe about half a pound of that there Swiss cheese. . . no, a few slices less." My Type A tendencies show as I ask for ahamandcheese-abagofchipsandaCoke, please. [*Editor:* You'll have to hyphenate this manually.] [*Author:* Hyphenate? — *editor*] It's not a very good sandwich.

The maneuver for meeting northbound *San Joaquin* 713 at Denair is to pull through the siding past it and then back up alongside the platform on the main line after No. 713 had departed. I'm not making this up.

The 23-minute delay out of Stockton grows and grows. At each stop the crew announces there are lots of people boarding and "We'll need all the seats" (a lot of seats are being used for baggage and feet). At Wasco the train is 40 minutes down. Ten minutes before Bakersfield, passengers start crowding down the stairs toward the doors, just like they do in a commuter train approaching a city. Arrival in Bakersfield is only 17 minutes late, thanks to slack in the schedule.

The passengers get onto the connecting buses quickly, but the baggage doesn't. Apparently there's a ritual the drivers have to go through, each signing a piece of paper about the baggage or something. That takes a while. The bus to Tehachapi and Palmdale gets under way 46

LEFT: **A late-afternoon *Coaster* heads out of San Diego for Oceanside on April 4, 2000. The tracks of San Diego's light rail line are adjacent.**

BELOW: **Earlier in the day, Amtrak *San Diegan* No.568 is about a minute away from its mid-morning arrival in San Diego. F59PHI No.453 is pushing the southbound train.**

minutes late with its four passengers and no checked baggage.

The bus offers a good view of the former Southern Pacific-Santa Fe line over the Tehachapis. It's a lot easier to watch trains from the bus than from behind the wheel of a car.

The closest lodging to Lancaster's Metrolink station is the Desert Inn, about 15 minutes on foot (there are taxis, but my body can use the walk). Sunday evening seems to be when Lancaster's restaurant workers enjoy a quiet meal at home, but the Village Grille, a couple of doors north of the Desert Inn, is open. Despite the bus driver's recommendation, the place's appearance isn't promising — it promises Family Dining — but the food proves surprisingly good, and the usual implication of "Family Dining" evaporates when I find they have Corona and Dos Equis.

Monday, April 3

I'm up at 5:00 a.m. so I can eat breakfast before the departure of the 6:26 Metrolink train to Los Angeles. I hear two Metrolink trains, the 5:17 and 5:53 departures, go by while I'm dressing; I was still asleep for the departure of the 4:20, the first of four morning trains.

As I walk to the station, a Union Pacific train of empty container cars zips past, heading for the Colton-Palmdale Cutoff. I buy a ticket from the machine, board the 6:26, and take an upstairs seat. Across the aisle is a guy hunched over a table with his pillow and blankie. Really.

By the time the train leaves Santa Clarita it's full. At Burbank more get off than on; ditto for Glendale. Leaving Glendale the conductor announces the next stop is Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal, which isn't its name any more, but it's how he and I know it.

At Mission Tower there's major gridlock: a double-stack container train coming off the former Southern Pacific from the east, Metrolink trains from the Riverside and Orange County lines (ex-Union Pacific and ex-Santa Fe, respective-ly), Metrolink equipment deadheading to the yard via the former Santa Fe route to Pasadena, an outbound *San Diegan,* and the *Starlight* — my *Starlight* — backing out. It arrived about 7:00. It must have lost more time, big time, beyond Sacramento. My Metrolink train finally reaches the platform at 8:40, 30 minutes late.

Perhaps there were times during World War II — maybe around Christmas when mail traffic was heavy, when the *California Limited* and the *Pacific Limited* and the *Owl* were running in multiple sections, when all of Southern Pacific's through freight had to squeeze past Mission Tower — times when LAUPT was busy to the point of gridlock, but for most of its life LAUPT's most visible characteristic was that it had lots of room for trains. Now, thanks to Amtrak and Metrolink, it's a busy place. David Lustig greets me, and we go to Philipe's, a nearby restaurant with good food and also with character - railroad photos and models are displayed on the walls.

I board the 11:00 *San Diegan* for the trip to Oceanside. The train consists of a former Metroliner cab car, three Horizon coaches, a full-dome lounge with snack counter underneath, an Amcoach for business class, a baggage car, and an F59PHI — hardly a matched set, except for those three Horizon coaches in a row. The train is nearly empty, and the Horizon coaches appear under-maintained — or perhaps overused, which is preferable. Cars earn no money sitting in a yard.

The first hour of the ride is not scenic, and the roadbed makes my writing look like Korean. After that, there's some beach-side running. It doesn't look like a beach day, but most southern California mornings don't. Come noontime, when the haze and fog burn off, that's beach time.

BELOW RIGHT: **The tracks of San Diego's Blue Line end right at the Mexican border in San Ysidro. The first of the modern light rail lines, the San Diego trolley has been one of the most successful operations in the country.**

BELOW: **With a typical varied consist, Amtrak *San Diegan* No.575 departs Fullerton for Los Angeles on January 19, 2000.**

I detrain at Oceanside at 12:50 to wait for the 4:35 *Coaster* commuter train to San Diego. The Oceanside Transportation Center is a sprawly, segmented sort of place: Amtrak here, Metrolink there, Greyhound at this end, Northern County Transit District buses out that way — and despite being operated by the same agency, NCTD doesn't sell *Coaster* tickets or have train information. I finally find the *Coaster* ticket machine next to the Metrolink machine and buy a ticket, qualifying for the senior rate by five days. (One purpose of this trip was to celebrate my sixtieth birthday. The day came to me an hour later at the Izaak Walton Inn, deep in the Mountain time zone, than it would have at home on Central Time. A couple of days later the barman in the *Starlight's* Pacific Parlour Car addressed me patronizingly as "Young man." No. Not any more. Not with gray hair and trifocals.)

The only food immediately visible in the Transportation Center (I'm not disposed to trudge all over town with my baggage) is a Burger King, whose patronage includes tattoos (both sexes), shaved heads (ditto), and fuzzy beards. The last appear to have spent a lot of time doing things that destroy brain cells.

If you're waiting for a train at Oceanside, you have a choice of a seat or shade, but not both. You'd think I'd learn to bring along a hat. During my wait at Oceanside there's not a lot of train watching: two *San Diegans* meet, a pair of Santa Fe Geeps rolls through northward, running light, and the *Coaster* arrives from San Diego.

The ride to San Diego is fast, comfortable, and scenic. The Solana Beach station is a surprise — new, in a cut below street level. I don't remember it from my last ride on the *San Diegan,* which was thirty-some years ago behind Santa Fe PA's. And Del Mar — what's happened to Del Mar?

Approaching San Diego I spot my Super 8 motel a couple of blocks east of the tracks. It's almost within walking distance, but I opt for a taxi. My baggage-carrying shoulders are tired.

Tuesday, April 4

I spend most of the day riding San Diego's light rail lines, taking full advantage of the senior fare: the whole north line, all the way south to the border and a few steps beyond, and most of the El Cajon line before I decide enough is enough. I finish the day by meeting Alan Miller and his wife Gloria Paschen for a pleasant dinner at the Brigantine restaurant overlooking the *Coaster*-Amtrak route. Then I have to sleep fast, because the airline decided a few days ago that I should be on an earlier flight to Minneapolis than I intended.

The Great South Bay Iron Triangle

The April trip was the return half of my January trip to California — an escape from winter disguised as a visit to the relatives. The two trips were each half of an air round trip and a rail round trip. In January my aunt's parting comment was, "That was your father's — you should have it." She was pointing to a chest about the size of the cargo space of a Toyota station wagon. It was far too big to carry home on the train with me, so I said I'd come get it in June. (In retrospect, I could have rented a truck for half a day, taken it to the station, and shipped the chest home on Amtrak Express, but I'd have missed a lot of good train watching along U.S. 30 across Nebraska and lots of other places.) Friends in the Bay Area who had been thinking they ought to ride the Altamont Commuter Express decided to use my visit as a reason to do so.

Wednesday, June 21

As Don MacInnes and I buy our Stockton-Oakland tickets in Amtrak's Jack London Square station, the agent sees in the computer that we aren't the only ones doing that. She asks how we're getting to Stockton. We tell her: ferry from Oakland to San Francisco, streetcar to the Caltrain station, Caltrain to Mountain View, light rail to Lick Mill, and ACE to Stockton. It strikes her as reasonable. As we finish buying the tickets, Rich Tower, who has laid out the itinerary, meets us. We find lunch nearby, then walk the short distance to the ferry.

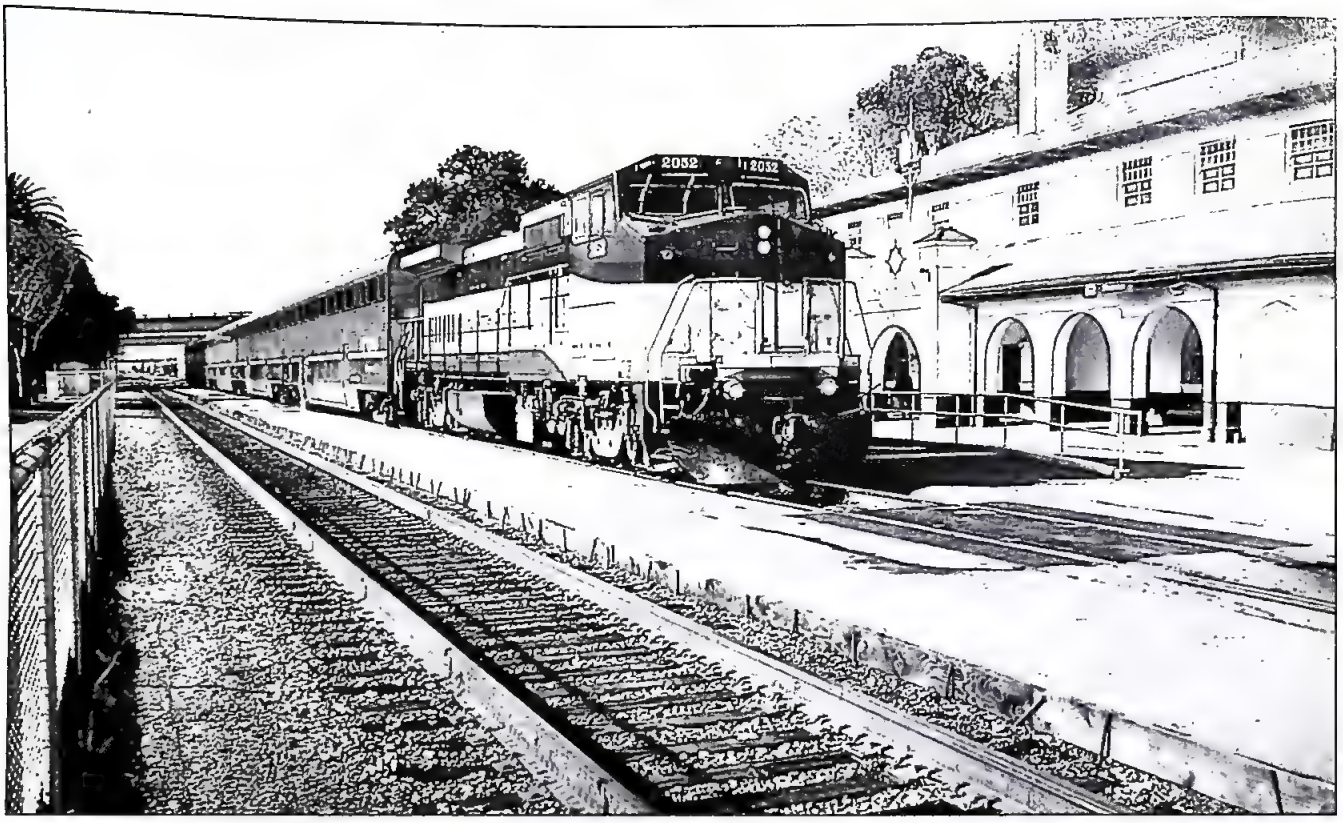
Down Through

I moved to San Francisco in 1966, eight years after SP's ferries ceased operation, and left long before the present ferry renaissance, so this is a new experience for me. The ferry is a sightseeing boat, much smaller than the boats that used to ply the bay. We board and take seats on the aft upper deck (I'm a landlubber, but I know enough not to say "upstairs and out back"). As we pass under the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, I remember seeing Key System trains on the lower deck of the bridge during a visit in 1951 — they, too, ceased operating in 1958.

Chuck Vercelli meets us at the San Francisco dock in front of what used to be Southern Pacific's general office building, where he and I worked long ago. We descend into the Municipal Railway's Embarcadero station, pay our fares, and wait for an inbound N-Judah streetcar to take us along the south end of the Embarcadero to the Caltrain station at Fourth and King Streets. It's a nice ride, if slow.

I remember the Southern Pacific station at Third and Townsend. It was a mission-style building, a temporary structure, intended for the duration of the Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915. Afterward, the tracks were to have been extended along the Embarcadero to the courtyard of the U-shaped general office building, but that never happened. The building at Third and Townsend was replaced in 1976 by a small, unmemorable station at Fourth and Townsend. It was extensively refurbished in 1999. With the extension of the streetcar line to the station, the location has been known as Fourth and King Streets — the same place, but psychologically a block farther from the business district.

Bob Glover meets us at the Caltrain station. We buy tickets to Mountain View and board the front car of the 2:00 train to San Jose. The cars were delivered with reversible seats, but SP diddled



ABOVE: **Amtrak *San Joaquin* No.714 arrives at the former Santa Fe station in Stockton, California, on January 16, 2000. Oakland-Bakersfield trains stop at this station, while Bakersfield-Sacramento trains use the Altamont Commuter Express station located on the former Southern Pacific.**

with the mechanisms, locking the seats into position facing the center vestibule, and said OSHA regulations required that.

Sitting on the left side, I can keep my eye on the westbound track (that's the timetable direction, and San Francisco is about as far west of San Jose as it is north). Tie replacement is in progress. The ties being removed are pretty much splinters and kindling wood, long overdue for replacement.

As the train approaches Bayshore, the conductor announces "Next stop Bayshore — excuse me, South San Francisco." When it stops, he said "This stop is South San Francisco," and as it departs, he announces "Next stop, South San Francisco." I'm glad I'm not a first-time rider destined for either Bayshore or South San Francisco.

Bay Area Loop

San Francisco	lv	2:00 p.m.	Caltrain
Mountain View	ar	3:08 p.m.	
San Jose Diridon	ar	3:29 p.m.	
Mountain View	lv	3:28 p.m.	VTA
Lick Mill	ar	3:45 p.m.	
San Jose Diridon	lv	4:14 p.m.	ACE
Great America	lv	4:27 p.m.	
Stockton (SP Sta.)	ar	6:37 p.m.	
Stockton (ATSF Sta.)	lv	7:55 p.m.	
Oakland	lv	9:55 p.m.	

WEBSITES:
www.vta.org
www.acerail.com
www.amtrak.com

The train seems slow compared to my memory of the 1960s, when the Fairbanks-Morse Train Masters could start an eight-car train like a rocket. It's not just the filter of memory — the train is about ten minutes late at Mountain View. We cross the tracks and board a light-rail car of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) for an interesting ride. The track crosses major arterial streets and freeway on- and off-ramps at grade and has several very sharp curves.

At Great America we get off, walk back the way we came a few hundred yards onto an overpass, and go down the stairs to the Altamont Commuter Express platform. We buy our one-way tickets to Stockton, $10.00 a pop, from a man standing under the overpass, the only shelter from the elements (the day is sunny and warm).The regular riders wear their passes and tickets on cords around their necks.

The platform is full of people, and shuttle buses keep arriving from local employers to swell the crowd. By the time the train comes, the platform is fuller than any other suburban station platform I've ever seen. The six-car train swallows the crowd, and the five of us find seats on the upper level of the cab car at the head of the train.

Most of the passengers get off at Pleasanton, Livermore, and Vasco in the Livermore Valley, but many continue to Lathrop and Stockton, 55 and 75 miles from San Jose. Indeed, one of the principal reasons for ACE's existence is that the nearest reasonably priced housing to the Silicon Valley (reasonably priced by California standards) is in the San Joaquin Valley near Tracy.

The train never gets up much speed, even allowing for the effect of sitting on the upper level of the coach, but there is a brief burst of fast running for a couple of miles near Lathrop. The *California Zephyr* never seemed to dawdle

rough here. That might be the filter of 30-some years working on my memory, but a check of old timetables shows the CZ averaged better than 50 m.p.h. over Altamont Pass.

Don Gill, a friend of Tower's, meets us at the former Southern Pacific station in Stockton. Tower announces that we're going to Lodi, 13 miles north, for dinner. However, we can't all fit into Gill's car, and even if we could teleport ourselves to the restaurant, we don't have enough time for six guys to order and eat dinner. It's a little over an hour 'til the departure of Amtrak's last *San Joaquin* of the evening to Oakland, if it's on time. We settle for a good Italian restaurant a few blocks away and eat fast.

Gill takes MacInnes, Glover, and me to the former Santa Fe station. Amtrak 717 is on time, and it arrives while Gill is making a second trip with Vercelli and Tower. We try delaying tactics, even telling the conductor that one of the other members of our group is an Amtrak official (Tower is a consultant working with Amtrak). The conductor says the train is already two minutes late and the doors are closing. We board the rear car. As the train starts, Glover looks out the rear door and sees the car arriving with Vercelli and Tower. We speculate on their options. Might Gill drive them to Antioch or Martinez — or, just as fast, Oakland? At Antioch and Martinez we scan the boarding passengers. No Vercelli, no Tower. Later Tower says the conductor did the right thing at Stockton. Part of Tower's work has been directed at improving on-time performance.

We watch an orange sun set over the San Joaquin-Sacramento delta as the train makes its unhurried trip to Oakland. Glover explains that Amtrak asked Union Pacific to raise passenger train speed limits because of all the money the state of California has put into the track. UP increased the limit for the state-supported *San Joaquins* and *Capitols*, but not for the *California Zephyr* and the *Coast Starlight*, which are not state-supported.

When the conductor lifts our tickets, he asks who the Amtrak official is. We tell him and assure him his neck isn't in danger. He asks a few more questions, trying to figure out who we are: Amtrak? Public Utilities Commission? Other management? He won't sleep well tonight.

We reach Jack London Square 13 minutes ahead of schedule. Shortly after we get back to MacInnes's house, the phone rings. It's Vercelli, calling from his apartment in San Francisco. He and Tower saw the connecting bus ready to depart from Stockton to San Jose and asked where else it stopped. Answer: the BART station in Pleasanton. Vercelli and Tower rode to BART's Lake Merritt station, walked to Jack London Square, and were in Tower's car heading for the Bay Bridge several minutes before our train reached Oakland.

Doing it yourself

The key element in the Oakland-Los Angeles trip is the bus connection between Bakersfield and Lancaster. Only trains 714 and 715 have connecting buses to or from Lancaster. Northbound from San Diego, you have a direct trip on Saturday, but Monday through Friday, if you want to ride the *Coaster* from San Diego to Oceanside, you have a choice of a whole afternoon in Lancaster or five hours in Los Angeles. You could ride some other Metrolink line during the layover in Los Angeles; there are also trains to Lancaster at 5:00 and 5:35. Metrolink trains run between Los Angeles and Oceanside, but for the most part, their schedules don't mesh with San Diego-Oceanside *Coaster* schedules and Los Angeles-Lancaster Metrolink schedules. And the usual caveat: The schedules shown herein are subject to change without notice.

The South Bay Iron Triangle is easy enough to do. The connection between Mountain View and Great America has a little slack in it. We could have taken the next LRV 10 minutes later (had the train been on time, we'd have ridden the previous LRV, ten minutes earlier), or we could have ridden Caltrain all the way to San Jose. Keep in mind that only the first ACE train from San Jose makes the connection with Amtrak in Stockton. I advise using a taxi or your feet between stations in Stockton (it's about a mile) and having a late supper aboard the *San Joaquin's* cafe car.

Making the trip in the opposite direction isn't something you would do for pleasure unless you're truly a morning person: ACE trains depart from Stockton at 4:18 and 5:30 a.m. ⊂

Down Through California (and Back)

City		Times			Carrier
Southbound					
Oakland	lv	* 10:00 a.m.			Amtrak 714
Bakersfield	ar	4:11 p.m.			
Bakersfield	lv	* 4:20 p.m.			Amtrak bus
Lancaster	ar	6:10 p.m.			
Lancaster	lv	a 6:26 a.m.	k 6:41 a.m.	k 9:41 a.m.	Metrolink
Los Angeles	ar	8:10 a.m.	8:26 a.m.	11:26 a.m.	
Los Angeles	lv	* 8:30 a.m.	* 9:40 a.m.	* 12:25 p.m.	Amtrak
Oceanside	ar	10:25 a.m.	11:32 a.m.	2:13 p.m.	
Oceanside	lv	a 11:00 a.m.	k 11:52 a.m.	k 3:10 p.m.	Coaster
San Diego	ar	12:00 noon	12:52 p.m.	4:10 p.m.	
Northbound					
San Diego	lv	a 7:45 a.m.		k 1:05 p.m.	Coaster
Oceanside	ar	8:45 a.m.		2:05 p.m.	
Oceanside	lv	* 8:58 a.m.		* 2:23 p.m.	Amtrak
Los Angeles	ar	10:50 a.m.		4:15 p.m.	
Los Angeles	lv	a 11:45 a.m.	a 3:45 p.m.	k 5:48 p.m.	Metrolink
Lancaster	ar	1:30 p.m.	5:30 p.m.	7:35 p.m.	
Lancaster	lv	* 10:35 a.m.			Amtrak bus
Bakersfield	ar	12:45 p.m.			
Bakersfield	lv	* 1:00 p.m.			Amtrak 715
Oakland	ar	7:20 p.m.			

* daily
a Monday through Friday
k Saturday
Websites:
www.metrolinktrains.com
www.amtrak.com

ABOVE: **Spokane, Portland & Seattle 4-8-4 No.700 backs past the station at Vancouver, Washington, and across the Columbia River bridge into Portland, Oregon, on April 20, 2001. The train will turn on the wye and head east on the BNSF main line on the north bank of the river for the day's journey to Pasco, Washington, on ex-SP&S rails.** OPPOSITE TOP: **In mid-afternoon on the same day, No.700 pulls the Homecoming Excursion below the bluffs at Wishram, Washington.** OPPOSITE BOTTOM: **In the rain, a westbound BNSF freight meets the excursion at a siding near Cape Horn, Washington.**

WHEN THE HUMAN genome is completely mapped, I am sure there will be a special segment which identifies us as "railfans." Otherwise, why would we travel from all over the world to photograph a steam train running up the Columbia River Gorge on the old Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway? We who chase trains are like Richard Dreyfus chasing the aliens in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. Dreyfus had a vision of Devil's Tower implanted in his mind. Our vision is of the perfect railroad photograph. Where did we get this crazy notion of railroad photography?

There we were, standing out in the rain along Highway 14 beside the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe main line on the north bank of the mighty Columbia River, about 15 miles east of Portland, Oregon. Getting wetter by the minute were photographers from Japan, the United States and Great Britain, a worldwide gathering.

On this soggy Friday morning, April 20, 2001, fast-moving clouds hugged the steep mountain slopes covered in coniferous rain forest. Ten-cent plastic bags served as rain bonnets for camera equipment costing thousands of dollars. We risked it all to capture an image of restored SP&S locomotive No.700 pulling an excursion train east from Vancouver, Washington.

We knew this event didn't happen every day. Here was a chance to photograph a vintage locomotive running through its historic stomping grounds. Here was a chance to recreate a classic image from the 1940s.

We heard an unmistakable sound in the distance, and the rain hoods came off as water peppered our Nikons and Canons. We chose not to think about what moisture does to electronics. We were ready. The thunder of No.700 filled our ears as the locomotive roared around the curve, trailing a plume of steam and smoke made thick by the cool, rainy weather. Shutters clicked and the ground trembled as the 64-year-old machine rushed past.

Everyone raced for their cars, and the chase began. As always there were some crazy, fearless drivers, but the BNSF K-9 police patrol and local constables kept the pack in check. We sped along the north bank of the Columbia, putting in the back of our minds the waterfalls and scenic Union Pacific line on the south side of the river. We had a real live steam train our hands.

The turnoff to Beacon Rock, an icon of the Columbia River Gorge, flashed by as we drove hard to catch the train. On any other day that monolithic stone outcropping might have been the subject of our cameras. But we were "train chasing." You don't waste film and time on mountain landscapes

In his pursuit of SP&S 700, one photographer seeks an answer

when a fleeting ghost from the past is on the loose.

We passed hundreds of fishermen who were out in boats where the Wind and Little White Salmon Rivers empty into the Columbia. This year's spawn was one of the largest salmon runs up the Columbia River in decades. I wondered if they even thought about the spectacle of a steam powered passenger train and the caravan of cars roaring past on the bridges above them. Or were they too intent on their vision of catching that lunker salmon?

Nearing Lyle, Washington, we emerged into the drier desert mountains. The rain receded to the west, and we enjoyed scattered clouds and bright sunlight. I continued to reflect on why such a group of men and some women, most of them over 40 years of age, traveled so far to see this train.

As a group of photographers set up their next shot at Wishram, the answer became partially clear. One fellow from Illinois told about riding with his engineer grandfather in the cab of a Rock Island steam locomotive in the 1940s. Another person from Pennsylvania related the childhood joys of watching GG-1s from his back yard while growing up in Philadelphia. Their interest in trains came from those childhood experiences.

I explained to these new friends how, as a ten-year-old boy, I rode from Arkansas to northern California on the *Southern Belle* and *San Francisco Chief* in 1957. From that time forward, I was in love with railroading and the American landscape through which these trains passed. We all had the same genetic predisposition. With a seminal event at a formative age, we were hooked on the romance of trains.

On occasions I become apologetic to my non-railfan photography friends who wonder why I can't "get over trains." When I survey the expanse of photography and its subject matter today, I become less apologetic. I don't photograph jumping dancers, celebrities, peeling paint or green peppers. I am inspired by the sight of a 440-ton steam locomotive in full stride, moving at 70 miles an hour across the landscape on steel rails. Railroading in the 21st Century is still America's largest mobile art form.

Railfan photographers join a distinguished group. F. Jay Haynes came west with the Northern Pacific

ABOVE: **On a bright Saturday morning, all is well with the world as SP&S No.700 charges past the wooden grain elevator at Eltopia, Washington, on its way from Pasco to Spokane.** BELOW: **A few hours later, two more grain elevators are passed at Beatrice (pronounced with the accent on the second syllable). A short time before, the train came to a stop on Providence Hill as the 700 developed mechanical difficulties and a diesel helper was added on the point.**

Railroad in the late 1800s and sent back east not only images of the railroad, but pictures of the beauty of the Yellowstone country and the northwest. William Henry Jackson photographed the narrow gauge of Colorado and New Mexico and provided a portrait of the Rocky Mountains at the close of the 19th Century. O. Winston Link showed us the greatness of steam trains on the Norfolk and Western in the 1950s and revealed a way of life in the Blue Ridge mountains which is now long gone.

No.700 performed well and pulled into Pasco, Washington, after crossing the Columbia River one last time. Richland, Pasco and Kennewick absorbed the weary travelers from the train into their hotels and restaurants for the night.

The following Saturday morning dawned clear and cool. Some great runbys were witnessed at Eltopia and Mesa. Just west of Beatrice, Washington, trouble struck. Unexpected wear on its valve rings disabled the locomotive. A BNSF helper, in Santa Fe yellow and blue, came to the rescue. Some photographers turned their attention to crafting classic shots of the round-end observation car, *James L. Gilmore,* as it crossed the farmland of eastern Washington. For the travelers on the steam train, the 30 m.p.h. speed restriction made for a long day. The train arrived several hours late into

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES P. BELL

Spokane's former Northern Pacific depot. What everyone didn't know was that worse predicaments awaited the passengers on the return trip.

On Sunday, April 22nd, the steam locomotive and her train limped back to Pasco with a diesel trailing "just in case." Unfortunately, on Monday morning, April 23rd, two head end cars derailed as the train was being prepared for the Pasco departure down the Columbia River Gorge to Vancouver, and the trip home by rail was scrubbed. Passengers traveled back to Vancouver by bus. No.700 and the train deadheaded back to Portland's Brooklyn Yard with diesel assistance.

I drove back to Portland in my rental car along the south bank of the Columbia, following I-84 and enjoying the Oregon side of this great river of the Northwest. Union Pacific freights passed one after the other, rumbling by waterfalls and rock outcroppings at the river's edge. I felt like a more complete Westerner after having seen the Columbia River. I was invigorated by the memory of the steam train I had followed east two days earlier. I felt a connection to the past and present after seeing the grand country of the old SP&S. Railroad photography is an adventure; I am glad it is in my genes, and I don't apologize for "train chasing" anymore.

ABOVE: **SP&S No.700 passes a vintage automobile on Washington Route 14 on April 20, 2001. Both were new in 1938 — the 700 was built in 1937 and the auto a year later.** BELOW: **There's something about a steam locomotive returning to the rails it used in regular service. How often had the 700 been reflected in the Columbia during its days of powering trains on the Spokane, Portland & Seattle? April 20, 2001, was indeed a significant day for the 700, and the Homecoming Excursion was aptly named.**

MetroLink Extension Opens

THE LONG-AWAITED extension of St. Louis MetroLink in St. Clair County, Illinois, is finally open for business. On May 4, 2001, crowds cheered as the first train broke through banners at stations along the new route in a "progressive" ribbon cutting. Photo opportunities were provided at each of the eight new stations. Shortly after noon, grand opening ceremonies began at MetroLink's College station with speeches and presentations by officials from the Bi-State Development Agency (MetroLink's builder and operator) and dignitaries including U.S. Rep. Jerry Costello (D-Ill.) and Missouri Governor Bob Holden. After the presentation, Bi-State's transit "ambassadors" handed out maps showing MetroLink's new station locations as well as the rerouted bus lines that will feed into the light rail at several of the new stations.

A Brief MetroLink History

For more than 20 years, light rail systems have popped up across the continent. Shortly after the San Diego trolleys began operation, several American cities began looking at light rail as a viable means of public transportation. Light rail vehicles are clean and quiet, and the track is less expensive to build than a conventional subway or elevated rail line.

St. Louis jumped on the light rail bandwagon early. Bi-State opened MetroLink's original 17-mile route between East St. Louis, Illinois, and St. Louis' Lambert International Airport in Missouri on July 31, 1993. Most of the original line used existing railroad rights-of-way for most of its length, constructed on ex-Norfolk Southern and Terminal Railroad Association alignments. The key to MetroLink's success was using an abandoned tunnel under downtown St. Louis and the historic 127-year-old Eads Bridge across the Mississippi River, which had not seen freight traffic for several years. This enabled Bi-State to connect the eastern and western sections of the line through the congested business district without expensive tunneling or resorting to street running. Although the MetroLink alignment has never been completely grade separated, it does have a dedicated right of way. Fortunately, the St. Clair extension could be built using an abandoned CSX alignment between East St. Louis and Belleville.

According to Bi-State, MetroLink transported nearly nine million riders during its first year of operation, almost double the predicted ridership, and patronage has continued to exceed forecasts. With a successful track record and wide public acceptance, it was no surprise that in 1993 St. Clair County voters approved a referendum to finance the design, construction and operation of a MetroLink extension. When the new light rail extension was opened to Southwestern Illinois College in Belleville this year, more than half of MetroLink's total 34.4 miles were now on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River. MetroLink is probably the only light rail operation in the United States to operate equal mileage in adjoining states. Lawmakers from Missouri and Illinois have worked diligently for years to get adequate funding to cover construction and operation. This bipartisan effort from both states helped bring the St. Clair extension to completion months ahead of schedule and under budget. Total expenses for the line were estimated to run nearly $340 million.

PHOTOGRAPHY: RALCON WAGNER

ABOVE: **Two trains traveling in opposite directions stop at MetroLink's Swansea station on a rainy May 6, 2001, one of two days the transit agency offered free service to promote its new St. Clair extension into Illinois.** TOP: **Dignitaries disembark from the first MetroLink train to operate over the extension at the Southwestern Illinois Collegestation in Belleville on May 4, 2001.**

Construction Begins in St. Clair County

Preliminary engineering for the extension started after Bi-State received an $8 million federal grant in September 1995. A year later, a full funding agreement was reached with the Federal share of the funding at 72% and local matching funds covering the remaining 28%. St. Clair County's

share was raised by revenue from a ½ cent sales tax approved by voters three years earlier. The final design phase began in November 1996 and was completed 15 months later. Construction began in March 1998 and was completed in March 2001. Testing was completed in the spring of this year. On April 10th, Illinois officials and community leaders were invited to ride a special VIP train to preview the St. Clair extension and the economic development that had already been brought to the communities along the new extension.

Features of the New Line

MetroLink's St. Clair extension is safe, attractive, and user-friendly. The new line is 17.4 miles long and uses a dedicated right-of-way which was originally occupied by CSX's former L&N main line between East St. Louis and Belleville. While the CSX line consisted of a single track at grade, MetroLink's line is double-tracked the entire distance using 105 pound continuous welded rail on concrete ties. All but 14 grade crossings have been removed, and those that remain are fully protected with signals, gates and median barriers to deter impatient drivers. The route is electrified using overhead catenary and has 28 automated switches along the route, primarily at crossovers.

There are eight new stations with high-level island type platforms, fare vending machines, telephones and bright lighting. All stations except for the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Center have park and ride lots. MetroLink's hours of operation are 5:30 a.m. to 12:30 a.m. daily. Trains operate on ten minute headways during off-peak hours throughout the day, with evening headways of 15 minutes. Trains operate more frequently during rush hour. The base fare is $1.25, whether one rides to the next station or across town. MetroLink passes and fares can be purchased at any station and in several other locations throughout the metropolitan area. Riders purchase tickets from vending machines before boarding train. On board, fare inspectors check riders randomly for proof of payment.

The Extension Opens to the Public

After eight years of anticipation, it was announced that MetroLink would open its St. Clair extension months ahead of schedule. On the weekend following the line's official grand opening, both Bi-State Development Agency and the St. Clair County Transit District jointly sponsored free MetroLink and MetroBus service to offer the St. Louis Metro area an opportunity to preview the new route, new stations, and reconfigured bus routes that feed into the line. Officials from Bi-State were available at all stations to assist riders, answer questions and distribute MetroLink ride guides. During the two-day "Welcome Aboard Weekend" it was estimated that over 130,000 people took advantage of the opportunity to ride the new service. Many trains were limited to standing room only, forcing Bi-State to increase the frequency. On Sunday just after noon, service was disrupted for about 30 minutes when strong winds toppled a tree onto the eastbound track near the Memorial Hospital station in Swansea. Trains were detoured over the westbound track until crews could remove the tree with chainsaws.

MetroLink's Promising Future

Ridership continues to increase across the MetroLink system since the St. Clair extension opened. Community leaders and legislators continue to be strong supporters of more expansion. In August 2000, Illinois Governor George Ryan awarded $60 million from Illinois FIRST funds for the next phase of MetroLink's extension, taking the double track line 3.6 miles east to Scott Air Force Base from its current terminus at Southwestern Illinois College. The St. Clair Transit District is also providing $15 million toward the project. Construction is well under way with a MetroLink bridge being built over Illinois Highway 161 just north of MetroLink's College station. Grading is in progress from Illinois 161 east to the site of the Shiloh-Scott station. Service on the Scott AFB extension is scheduled to begin in spring 2003. Eventually, supporters want to see the line reach to MidAmerican Airport in eastern St. Clair County. Funding is currently being sought for this last segment.

Meanwhile in St. Louis, preliminary engineering work has already begun on MetroLink's Cross-County extension. This line will run from MetroLink's existing Forest Park station south toward Interstate 44. This line has already been funded and construction is to begin next spring, with service scheduled to begin in the summer of 2005. Several other light rail corridors are proposed for the western portion of St. Louis as well.

The May 8th issue of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported that St. Louis is the ninth-worst metropolitan area for traffic congestion in the country according the Texas Transportation Institute's Urban Mobility Study. With highway gridlock becoming a major headache for cities across the country, St. Louis isn't just talking about solutions, but is solving the problems. In the past, some community leaders were skeptical of light rail and felt it would not put a dent in the region's traffic woes. Today, those same people want to know when a MetroLink line will be built to serve their communities.

The author thanks Linda Hancock-Ross, Director of Communications for the Bi-State Development Agency for her cooperation and assistance with this article.

BOOK DEPOT

***NEW!* Southern Pacific's Colorful Shasta Route (A15664)**, Dill. A full-color pictorial covering Southern Pacific's lines through the mountains between Oakland, California and Portland, Oregon. Includes postwar steam and rare diesels from 1950 through 1975. Map by John Signor. 128 pp hard . . . **$49.95**

***NEW!* Chesapeake & Ohio Color Pictorial Volume One (A15658)**, Stegmaier. System-wide photographic coverage features all major classes of Chesapeake &Ohio, Pere Marquette and Fort Street Union Depot steam and diesel motive power in full color. 128 pp hard **$49.95**

***NEW!* Railroads of the Pine Tree State (A15663)**, Marson and Jennison. Full-color, pre-Guilford coverage of Maine's railroads, from Aroostook Valley to Maine Central and everything in between. Mostly vintage diesel, includes some steam and rolling stock. 128 pp hard. **$49.95**

***NEW!* Santa Fe in the Lone Star State (A15665)**, Goen. Brilliant color images of the Santa Fe in Texas, from branch line doodlebugs and big steam during the 1954 vegetable rush, to silver U30CGs and blue SD45s in the '60s. Dozens of station portraits organized by division. 128 pp hard . . . **$49.95**

***NEW!* New England's Colorful Railroads, Volume One (A15661)**, Sweetland. Classic vintage color views reflect the variety of New England railroading, from Springfield Terminal electrics to B&M steam, the Rutland, and New Haven's heavy duty main lines. It's all here! 128 pp hard **$49.95**

***NEW!* The PA — Alco's Glamour Girl (A15662)**, Romano. Complete color coverage of the development and service life of America's favorite diesel, from Santa Fe 51 to the remaining units in Mexico and Brazil. Detailed history by railroad, includes roster of all units. 128 pp hard **$49.95**

***NEW!* Kansas City Southern Color Pictorial (A15660)**, Goen. Covers KCS in the diesel years, from Alco high hoods to today's high horsepower road engines, plus a little steam. Features a good variety of passenger equipment and dozens of station portraits. 128 pp hard. **$49.95**

***NEW!* Gulf, Mobile & Ohio Color Pictorial (A15659)**, Wallin. Classic images from Chicago & Alton days up to the ICG merger. Excellent variety of diesel models and paint scheme variations, from the Rebel and the DL109s to GM&O's last EMD road units. Some steam, too. 128 pp hard. **$49.95**

***NEW!* Houston North Shore (A14600)**, Robinson and DeVerter. Complete history of Texas electric railway, from its opening in 1927 through Missouri Pacific control. Thorough roster, track diagrams, maps. Drawings and photos of electric cars, motors, and rail buses. 166 pp hard **$40.00**

Beauty of Railroad Bridges (12031), Cook. History of trestles and bridges, with more than 250 illustrations. 208pp hard .**$44.95**

Burlington Northern into the 90s (A15652), Shine. BN motive power in the early 90s. 208pp hard **$48.00**

California Railroads (A12040), Fickewirth. Encyclopedia of railroads, interurbans, etc. 200pp hard **$46.95**

Canadian Trains (A14501), Huxtable. Color photos of steam and diesel in Canada. 48pp soft.....**$19.95**

The Challenger Locomotives (A14000), Kratville. B&W album on UP's big articulateds. 144pp hard **$35.00**

CF7 Locomotives (A12500), Poole. Comprehensive illustrated history with roster info. 112pp, soft.....**$24.95**

The Chili Line (A14150), Dorman. B&W look at the D&RGW branch from Antonito to Santa Fe. 215pp, hard **$44.95**

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20 Questions

RECENTLY, AN INTERESTED READER, scanning R&R's ANNUAL GUIDE TO DINNER TRAINS in the June issue for the first time, asked, "Do you offer any sort of evaluative comments?" "For a number of reasons," I replied, "not the least being the designing and collecting of an appropriate and objective measuring device, the answer is 'No.'" Until now. Nagged by the gentle reader's question, and it being a reminder of something that I've noodled over for some time anyway, here I've set down the 20 questions I believe it is fair to ask of a rail dining experience. That was **Step One.**

Step Two is in your hands, and it entails making a photocopy of this questionnaire (so you don't destroy your magazine), for each dinner train you ride. During and after your rail dining experience, complete the questionnaire. Then go to Step Three below.

Dinner Train:

_____

Date of Trip:

_____

Answer the following questions (Where choices are offered, check the answer you deem appropriate. Where a rating is asked for, use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being the lowest rating, and 10 the highest).

Location:

1. Directions to the boarding location are clear and easy to follow. Rating: _____
2. Parking is nearby, adequate for the number of guests, and comfortably navigable. Rating: _____.

Reservations:

3. How many people were in your dinner party? _____
4. How far in advance did you make your reservation?
   ___You were a last-minute walk-up.
   ___Within one week of the trip.
   ___Within one month of the trip.
   ___More than one month before the trip.
5. How did you make your reservation?
   ___In person
   ___By telephone
   ___On the internet
   ___Other
6. How would you rate your reservation experience? _____

Personnel:

7. The train was staffed appropriately for the number of guests on board. Rating: _____
8. The skill, demeanor, and efficiency of the wait staff that served my table was appropriate. Rating: _____.

Menu:

9. Rate the variety of main course entrees you were offered: _____.
10. The main course(s) offered was/were an unusual and interesting variation on how such foods are usually prepared by a restaurant. Rating: _____.

Food:

11. How delicious was each course offered?:
    Appetizer. Rating: _____.
    Soup. Rating: _____.
    Salad. Rating: _____.
    Main. Rating: _____.
    Dessert. Rating: _____.
12. The food I ordered was delivered at the right temperature. Rating: _____.
13. The food was prepared and arranged on my plate in an eye-appealing manner. Rating: _____.

Service:

14. The service was prompt, with each dish served at appropriate intervals. Rating: _____
15. The wait staff was courteous and professional in satisfying my wants and needs. Rating: _____

Ride:

16. Rate the train ride in terms of speed, noise level, and smoothness of ride: _____.

Train:

17. The equipment used was clean and comfortable. Rating _____.
18. The car I rode in was adequately equipped for its task. Rating: _____.

Trip:

19. Rate the view you had from the window by your seat on the train: _____.
20. Rate the level of fun, enjoyment, and satisfaction you received from the total rail dining experience. Rating: _____.

Additional Comments: Feel free to add comments on your responses, or on other matters of interest or concern to you, on the reverse side of your photocopy, or on a separate sheet of paper.

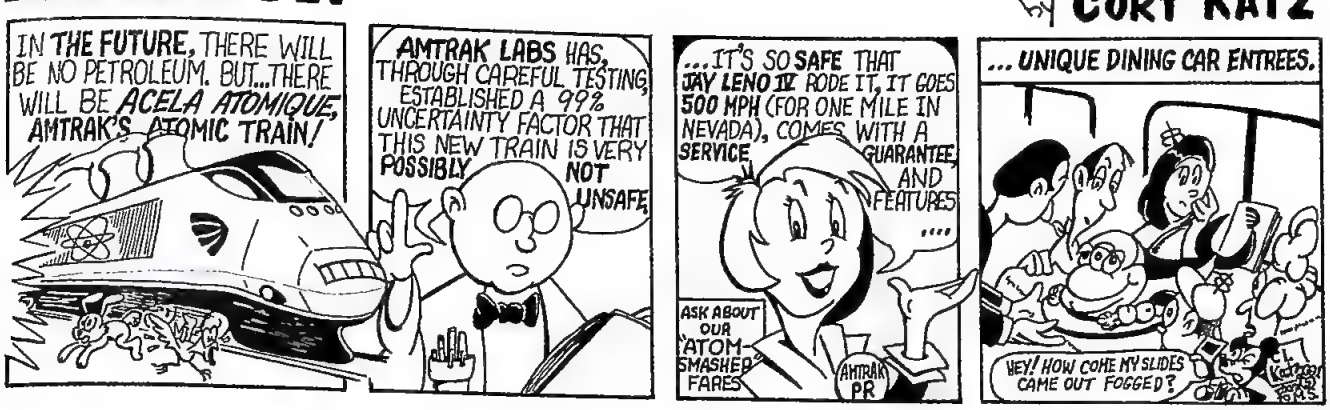
Name (optional):
_____

Telephone Number (optional):
(___)_____-_____

Email address (optional):
_____

Step 3: You have two choices. 1). Mail your completed questionnaire to Jim Porterfield, 763 Cricklewood Drive State College, PA 16803; or, 2). Leave the completed questionnaire with the dinner train operator. (*Note:* Dinner train operators who are not already collecting

PLEASE SEND correspondence concerning ON THE MENU directly to James Porterfield, 763 Cricklewood Drive, State College, PA 16803.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this information are free to use this questionnaire as is, or to modify it as appropriate, to collect feedback from patrons either at the end of a run, or by sending it universally or selectively to guests after their trip.

Step 4: An incentive — from among the forms received by yours truly, and postmarked September 30, 2001, or before, one will be selected at random to receive a free collector's item: A first printing hard cover edition of *Dining by Rail*. To qualify, the questionnaire must include a name and telephone number.

All responses mailed to me will remain confidential. However, an anonymous summary of the results may, from time to time, be compiled for distribution to dinner train operators. The intent is to improve the rail dining experience for all of us.

Disclaimer: The questions here are my creation. They have not been influenced by, solicited from, or approved by, established dinner train operators. Suggestions for improving the questionnaire are welcomed from both guests and operators alike.

So, after heading to the photocopier, and equipping yourself with a pen or pencil, get out there and dine by rail. *Bon appetit.*

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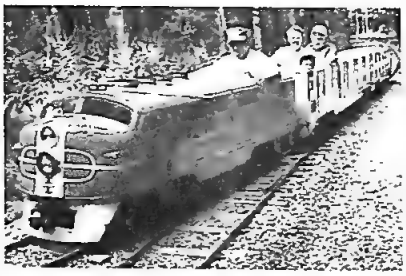

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In Focus

News-feature

TOM KLINE

***FRISCO 1522** passes the former Santa Fe freight depot (now used by a theatrical group) in Brenham, Texas, with the BNSF Employee Appreciation Special on June 1, 2001.*

1522 Visits Texas

FRISCO 4-8-2 No.1522, operated by the St. Louis Steam Train Association, got a real chance to strut its stuff as it led the 2001 version of Burlington Northern & Santa Fe's *Employee Appreciation Special*. The trip took 1522 from its home in St. Louis, Missouri, to Oklahoma and Texas, hauling 15 cars for over 2800 miles (3869 miles including deadhead moves) on 35 different trips for BNSF employees. Stops included Fort Worth, Houston, Oklahoma City and others. The locomotive performed nearly flawlessly during the trip.

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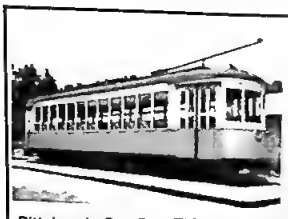
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Light rail, transit and commuter rail news

A Boom in

RAIL RIDERSHIP IS BOOMING all over the United States. That holds true for relatively new urban rail services as well as long-established rail lines, such as in New York or Chicago. One sign of this is crowded trains and parking lots. Metro North commuter service in Connecticut and New York state, Metra services and CTA services in Chicago, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority in the nation's capital area and the new Los Angeles rapid transit system in North Hollywood all suffer from lack of sufficient parking. The venerable South Shore Line commuter service in Indiana has expanded its parking at the Hammond station three times in recent years. The last time, an entire city block was taken over by a new parking lot; it was filled immediately.

The crowding of trains is old hat to some lines, such as the aforementioned South Shore Line, which operates rush-hour trains with well over 100% of capacity. The newest rail line to open in the United States is the southern portion of the Washington Metrorail Green Line south from Anacostia in Prince George's County, Maryland, to Branch Avenue. The official prediction was that about 18,000 trips would be made by new riders six months after the new stations had opened. The very first workday of operation serviced 14,777 trips. The first Wednesday of operation saw 19,517 passengers boarding at Branch Avenue, Suitland, Naylor Road, Southern Avenue and Congress Heights. As a result of far more passengers than expected, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority will add cars to the trains on the Green Line extension.

The practice for a number of years at Washington Metrorail has been to run six-car trains during rush hour on the other lines, but the Green Line, with lower ridership up until now, only enjoyed four-car trains. Within a few days, three six-car trains were added to the Green Line service, and additional two six-car trains were run in the rush-hour service by the end of January. Many thanks to John J. Hanlon for the interesting information. Who says nobody rides transit?

METRA expansion

Building or expanding rail service can be aggravatingly slow. The good people of Manhattan, Illinois, are anxious to get commuter rail service to their town that will take them directly into the Loop in downtown Chicago. A tidy sum of $100 million is earmarked for extension of the southwest service to Manhattan. It now terminates at 179th Street and U.S. Route 6 in Orland Park. The extension to Manhattan will be eleven miles in length. The commuter service will follow the trail of the old Wabash Railroad, which is now owned by the Norfolk Southern.

Once Manhattan service is achieved, there will be further consideration by Metra to expand the service to points beyond. Among the possibilities is an extension west to Elwood, the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery and the Midwest National Tall Grass Prairie; all points are south of Joliet. When the extension is completed, service will expand to 30 trains a day from the present 16. The route will have its capacity improved by additional track between Palos Park and 143rd Street in Orland Park, as well as upgrading of the signal system. The current southwest line trains run into the south side of Union Station. It is expected that the southwest service trains will eventually be shifted to LaSalle Street station, which is now used only by Rock Island district trains.

In the meantime, work is commencing on a new station in Palos Heights, located at 114th Street and Southwest Highway. Many thanks to Steve Scalzo for the information.

Time to ride a Birney

How many of you folks out there have ever ridden in a genuine Birney safety car, the four-wheel brainchild of engineer Charles Birney? Probably the best and most beautiful place for this opportunity is at the Fort Collins Municipal Railway Society operation on Mountain Avenue in Fort Collins, Colorado (P.O. Box 635, Fort Collins, CO 80532). Most Birney operations were gone by the time World War Two came around. Marion, Indiana; Fort Collins, Colorado; and several lines in Philadelphia come to mind as late users of the little four-wheeled cars. I suspect there may have been some other places, too. In any event, now is the time to get yourselves to Fort Collins to enjoy riding car No.21 on the Mountain Avenue line.

South Line in Sacramento is underway

Sacramento has one of the best transit systems for a city of its size in the United States. Its light rail line is in many ways a model for others to follow, having been built at very modest cost considering its scope. There are now light rail additions under construction. The South Line received delivery of rail in the fall of 2000 and crews were soon busy welding the steel into quarter-mile lengths. By the time you read this, track installation will be well along between the Sacramento central business district and Meadowview to the south. This portion of the line is to open in 2003. Soon after, it is expected that construction will get underway on expansion of the South

PLEASE SEND any light rail, transit and commuter rail news items or correspondence directly to Prof. George M. Smerk Institute for Urban Transportation, 825 E. 8th Street, Bloomington, IN 47408-3805.

by GEORGE M. SMERK

Rail Ridership

Line from Meadowview to Calvine/Auberry.

Meanwhile, it was discovered that the extension east to Folsom will have a higher price tag than expected. The Regional Transportation Authority in Sacramento is expected to make up the funding shortfall. In the meantime, General Manager Pilka Robinson happily announced that Governor Gray Davis and the California Transportation Commission approved a $131 million grant to the Regional Transportation Authority. This was carried out under the Traffic Congestion Relief program that was announced by Governor Davis and approved by the legislature early in 2000.

If you have the opportunity, be sure to visit Sacramento to see the light rail line and the close integration of service between the bus and rail operations. Thanks to Bob Blymyer for the news.

Museum cars in a movie

If you happen to rev up the VCR and see the motion picture *Bojangles,* you will see a scene in which Bill Robinson is about to ride on the *Los Angeles Limited.* The *Limited* car was actually London & Port Stanley car No.8 and Montreal & Southern Counties car No.107. Both cars are at the Halton County Radial Railway. The museum's Carbarn 2 is supposed to be Chicago's Union Station. Thanks to the Radial Report of the Ontario Electric Railway Historical Society, P.O. Box 578, Milton, Ont. L9T 5A2.

Fort Worth studies more service

Before very long, the Trinity Railway Express commuter train that runs from Dallas along the erstwhile Rock Island line will reach its terminal in downtown Fort Worth. The idea of commuter rail service has been eagerly accepted by local officials, and they are studying the idea of adding commuter rail service on the former Cotton Belt line from the Fort Worth stockyards through northeast Tarrant County to Addison, Texas. Service on the Cotton Belt line would be on the portion that is already owned by Dallas Area Rapid Transit. It would pass through the Tarrant County cities of Fort Worth, Halton City, Watauga, North Richland Hills, Hurst, Colleyville, Southlake and Grapevine. On the west side of Fort Worth, officials are entering into early negotiations for the use of the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railway line that would extend the Cotton Belt route discussed above from the stockyards into downtown Fort Worth. Thanks to Mike Murray for the information.

Boston complaints

Francis C. Carroll sent me a clipping from the *Boston Globe.* It is a summary of a week's complaints about the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority service. As a member of the board of a commuter railroad since 1977, I have heard a few complaints from customers, too. Whether it is late trains, overcrowding or trains annulled, an overriding problem is the failure to give the riding public a reason for what is going on. If a train is delayed by a brake problem, the public should be told, along with a reasonable estimate of the length of the delay. The failure to provide this basic information seems to be at the heart of a lot of the complaints, many of them very vivid, that customers make.

Flashes

Metal slivers have been found in the mechanism that drives the funicular **ANGEL'S FLIGHT** railway in Los Angeles. A fatal accident in early February caused the railway to be shut down. The two cars have been placed in storage while the investigation of the accident moves on. Investigators have ruled out the cars themselves as a cause of the accident and now all focus is on the mechanism that drives the cable that moves the cars.

On the Long Beach line of the Los Angeles **METRORAIL BLUE LINE,** the intersection of Vernon Avenue and Long Beach Avenue has proven to be the most dangerous grade crossing. There have been 16 accidents, including four deaths, since 1990. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority has installed a new fiber-optic sign in vivid yellow on a black background; images flash and move when a train approaches. Thanks to Douglas I. Duncan for the information.

In **BALTIMORE,** officials of both the state and the city are giving consideration to a large expansion of the light rail service. Eventually a rail loop would be built around downtown; it would be part of a state plan to double transit ridership by 2020. It is expected to cost about $250 million in current money. A number of different alternatives are being considered; all options would start at Penn Station on the north side of downtown Baltimore and extend east and then south along the Fallsway. Thanks to John Hanlon for the information.

The **MINNESOTA TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM** (193 Pennsylvania Avenue E, St. Paul, MN 55101) is looking for volunteers to help with the Como-Harriet streetcar line. Streetcar operators are needed along with people possessing maintenance and restoration skills. Those with ability to create historic displays are also needed, as are people with skills and interest in providing publicity and promotion for the museum. People who would like to work on the museum's physical plant are also needed. Contact may be made by phone, 651/228-0263, 800/711-2591, and *www.mtmuseum.org.* The Minnesota Transportation Museum is also looking for additional members. It has a steam railway and a waterborne operations, as well as the Como-Harriet streetcar line.

One thing holding back the Los Angeles **METRO RED LINE** from achieving its projected ridership goals is the lack of parking at several of its stations. In early

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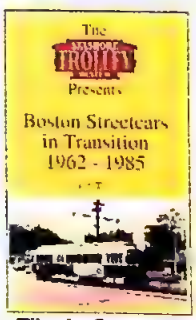

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February, 186 spaces were added to the parking lot at the North Hollywood subway station to help meet the demand. Despite parking woes, ridership on the Red Line is close to estimates made several years ago. Average weekday boardings for the last half of 2000 were 110,094 trips. Of the new stations, North Hollywood weekday average is 6,215, Universal City station has 7,550, and Hollywood Boulevard/Highland Avenue was boarding 4,784 persons. To boost ridership, the MTA is advertising using billboards. The message, over a huge photograph of a traffic jam on a freeway is "Had enough? Try Metrorail." Thanks to Frank R. Bauer for the information.

If you live in the vicinity of East Windsor, Connecticut, the **CONNECTICUT ELECTRIC RAILWAY ASSOCIATION,** Inc. (P.O. Box 360, East Windsor, CT 06088-0360) is looking for volunteers. To phone, call 860/627-6540. E-mail is *information@ceraonline.org.*

The new **PORT OF LOS ANGELES** waterfront red car line is a one-half-mile-long vintage trolley service. The Port of Los Angeles is sponsoring the project and the line uses a former Pacific Electric right-of-way that has been freight-only for years. For more information contact Railway Preservation Resources at 818/704-5671; fax is 818/999-3011, and e-mail is *ismatlak@earthlink.net.*

Merritt Mullen wrote to correct some figures in the February 2001 issue of R&R. Average ridership on the Los Angeles subway **RED LINE** was about 40,000 a day before the Hollywood segment opened. It increased to 60,000 with the opening of the line to Hollywood. It doubled to 120,000 when the final segment was opened to North Hollywood. As a matter of interest, ridership on the Blue and Green lines also increased to about 55,000 and 20,000 respectively.

There is a feeling in many parts of America that **NEW JERSEY** is a place where people live but go elsewhere to work. This belief is threatened by the reality that approximately 255,000 commuters commute to New Jersey every day. They come by bus, car and train, and now come in increasing numbers by ferry. Soon to come into service will be the new connection by monorail from Newark International Airport to the station that links it to Amtrak service and NJ Transit commuter trains. This will be the first airport in the New York City area that will be accessible by rail plus the connection of the monorail. The monorail connection is expected to be in use by the fall of 2001. A ride from Penn Station in Manhattan to the airport terminal should take less than 30 minutes. Of that, about ten minutes would be spent on the trip from the monorail station along the Northeast Corridor to all three terminals at the airport. Jon Goodman was the kind supplier of the information.

The staff (read volunteers) of the **HALTON COUNTY RADIAL RAILWAY** (P.O. Box 578, Milton, ON L9T 5A2) worked hard in 2000 to replace the track adjacent to Barn 1. It was the largest track reconstruction project that the association has ever attempted. It cost $9800 and involved the work of 40 members who assisted with the project. The Halton County Radial Railway is the operating entity of the Ontario Electric Railway Historical Association.

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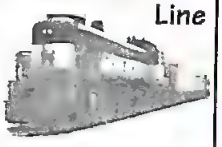

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Camera Bag

Your guide to railfan photography

by JIM BOYD

It's the presentation

IN THIS COLUMN last month, I was commenting on the lessons we could learn from the book *An American Journey* by Mark S. Vandercook, featuring black & white photos of railroading during the Depression, taken by a number of notable pioneer "documentary" photographers whose work was widely published in the news magazines of that era.

Aside from the sheer quality and variety of the imagery, one of the things that struck me about the book was how some otherwise rather ordinary photos took on a special majesty when presented one-to-a-page and surrounded by respectful white space and elegant captions. It made you stop and look at the content of the photo, when a casual glance might cause you to just pass right by it. Sometimes it's just the way a photo is presented that imparts a sense of quality.

This is especially true of slides and railfan slide shows. On the screen, all images are rendered equal in any given setting. If the slide show is casual and the pace fairly swift, many excellent images can just blur into an overall viewer overload of input. By the same token, many crappy images can be given agonizingly prolonged scrutiny by a slow projectionist who feels compelled to verbalize every obvious element in the poorly composed and underexposed image.

It is up to the projectionist to understand the audience and pace the show to present the images in their proper perspective. The big multi-media shows like Winterail, Summerail and EastRAIL offer a great opportunity to enhance the presentation by careful pacing of the image "dwell" time and dissolve effect, as well as the musical background for emphasis. This can also be abused by insensitive mechanical pacing and inappropriate music.

Sheer image quality alone will not save a multi-media presentation. Some of the very finest individual photography I've ever seen was totally destroyed at a major show many years ago when the program went *way* too long and just bludgeoned the audience with spectacular railroading, glint shots and sunsets without end even when the music and narration track was unfinished and ended midway through the show. It was almost as excruciating as an unrelenting parade of mediocre and cliché images in random order marched along to the wrong music. Multi-media really brings out the talent — or lack of it — in the photographer and presenter, because he/she/it must be the critical judge of his/her/its own work.

Getting back to the print media, however, it is rare for the photographer to be the book designer and layout artist. A sensitive editor and artist can present the picture without emotional attachment to the image. And a poor editor can butcher the job even quicker.

Photos that are presented grandly are usually accepted grandly by the viewer, and those that are just crammed in are often considered to be merely informative or illustrative of some specific aspect of the story. The same photo can make an entirely different impression depending on how it is presented on the page.

This is true in almost any print media. As editor of R&R, I was always looking for the "lead" photo, which could make a strong first impression that would draw the reader into the article. Selecting photos is very different from taking photos, and an editor will often have a very different "view" of photography than the photographer. The editor is looking for impact and a variety of shapes and colors so that the pages don't all look alike. He judges a "good" photographer on his ability to provide that variety of imagery and not by a singular passion for the "perfect" photo. Some of the best "artistic" photographers make very boring presenters, because they get hooked on one approach to the subject.

This is where true photojournalists like Ted Benson stand above the crowd. Ted can choose the tool and technique for any job, from a tele glint to a softly lighted human face. And when it comes to presentation, his book *One Track Mind* is one of the best examples around today.

It is unfortunate that the economic realities of the mass market versus the railfan market often force a compromise between the artistic ideal and the practical end result in book formats and presentation. The 8½×11 vertical format used by this magazine and the majority of books is mandated by the technical characteristics of the printing presses and book binders. The horizontal "landscape" format is much more expensive at the book binder and will drive up the retail price of any book. The same applies to the oversize formats of the "coffee table" books that can generally be economically produced only for the mass market.

Page count is a critical factor in the cost-versus-sale-price formula, and most railfan subjects are obliged to fit a predetermined format and page count. Those books that let the content determine the page count are often risky financial undertakings. In a magazine like R&R, it is a balance between cover price, circulation and advertising revenue that determines the final page count — not how many articles the editor wants to run.

"Presentation" is often the most important aspect in how a photo is perceived, and unfortunately it is the one over which the photographer usually has little or no control. Understanding how it works, though, can go a long way in helping a photographer learn to improve his approach to the subject. You need to know in advance why you're taking the picture and have some idea of how it will be ultimately presented. This can be as simple as your own snapshot photo album or a pizza-and-slide-show in your basement, or it can be as ambitious as a magazine photo contest, news photo or feature article or ultimately a book.

As someone who has spent a lifetime taking pictures and being privileged to judge and use the work of others, my advice for anyone seeking to be published is to be technically proficient and go for a variety of images, from rosters to scenics and details to people.

May — the fantrip month

FANTRIPS IN EARLY MAY *provided photographers with many worthwhile subjects. On May 5th, Middletown & Hummelstown T6 No.1016 ran down the streets of Middletown, Pennsylvania (above). The Cheat River Salamander operated in West Virginia between Bowden and Spruce on May 11th (below) while Western Maryland BL2 lead a photo freight between Bowden and Tygart Junction on May 14th (below middle). Cape May Seashore Lines operated a special for photographers in New Jersey on May 12th (bottom), which paused at the Wildwood Junction station.*

THERE WAS A TIME when October was the busiest month for fantrips and railfan events. With beautiful fall colors in the East and cool, crisp days in the West, it seemed every tourist line and fantrip operator vied for attention (and patrons) during the four weekends in October.

Recently, however, it seems that May has become just as busy as October. Many folks hibernate during the winter months, and with spring chores out of the way they are ready to get trackside to take part in a railfan activity. Here in the Northeast we have a pretty full platter to choose from, and the first weekend in May brought the first railfan weekend.

On May 5th I headed out to Middletown, Pennsylvania, for a railfan day on the Middletown & Hummelstown, a railroad that hauls both freight and tourists (their one freight customer is located fairly close to their interchange, so only passenger trains ply most of the line). Sponsored by the Jersey Central Railway Historical Society and organized by Carl Perelman, the feature attraction of the day

ABOVE and BELOW: CARL FRANZ

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DAVE BURTON

OCTOBER 2001 ISSUE ON SALE SEPTEMBER 1

I was a photo freight powered by Alco T6 No.1016.

The following weekend Carl Franz had his annual photographers' weekend at the Cass Scenic Railroad planned. Unfortunately, Carl's trips often fall on Mother's Day weekend, and I usually have family commitments on that Sunday. Knowing that other railfans might be in the same situation, I planned a Saturday-only event for the Wilmington Chapter NRHS on the Cape May Seashore Lines. CMSL has reunited eight of the twelve original RDC's that operated for the Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines (nine survive) and operates them on ex-PRSL trackage near the New Jersey shore. CMSL was able to give us a pair of RDC's and we did several photo stops as photographers tried to recreate the days of the PRSL.

Meanwhile, down in West Virginia, Carl Franz had sandwiched his Cass weekend between two events on the newly-formed West Virginia Central (which interchanges with the Cass Scenic at Spruce). He arranged for a trip using WVC's new railbus, the *Cheat River Salamander*, to run from Cheat Bridge northward to Bowden and southward to the "big cut" below Spruce on Friday, May 11th. On Saturday and Sunday his group rode at Cass, then on Monday they were back on the WVC, riding a mixed train behind a Western Maryland BL2 from Bowden to Tygart Junction.

These trips were operated primarily with photography in mind. I realize some fans have no interest in anything "touristy" — I think they are missing out on some great photo opportunities.

Steve

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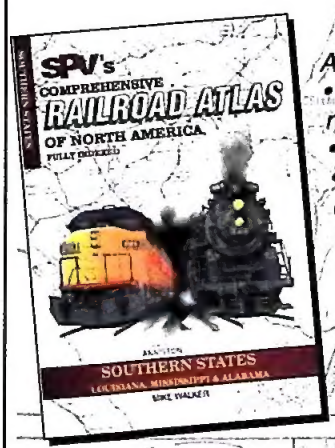

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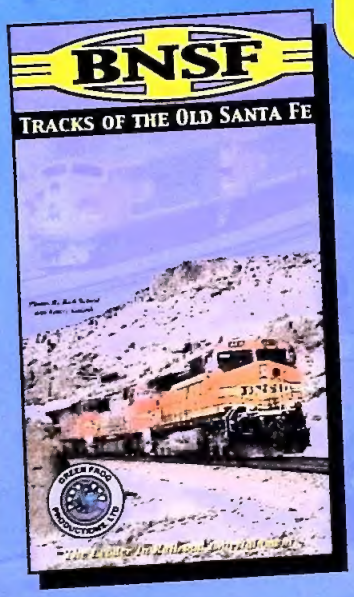

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